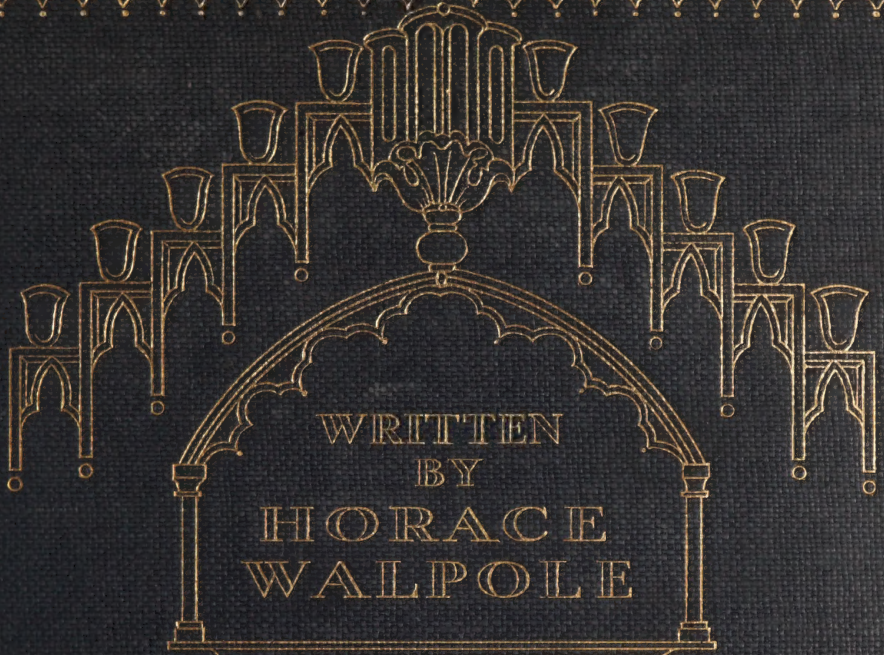
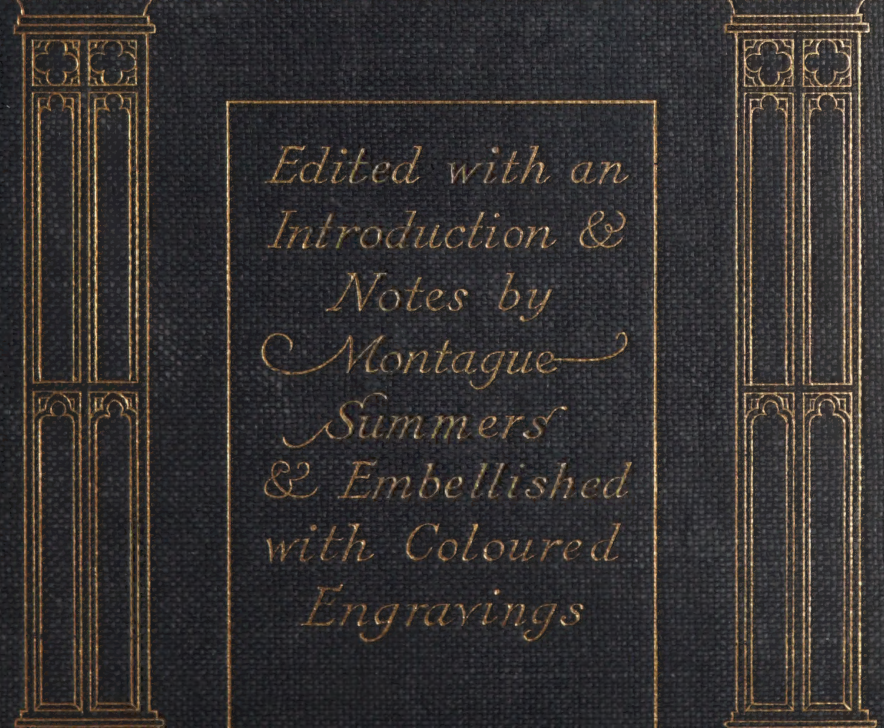
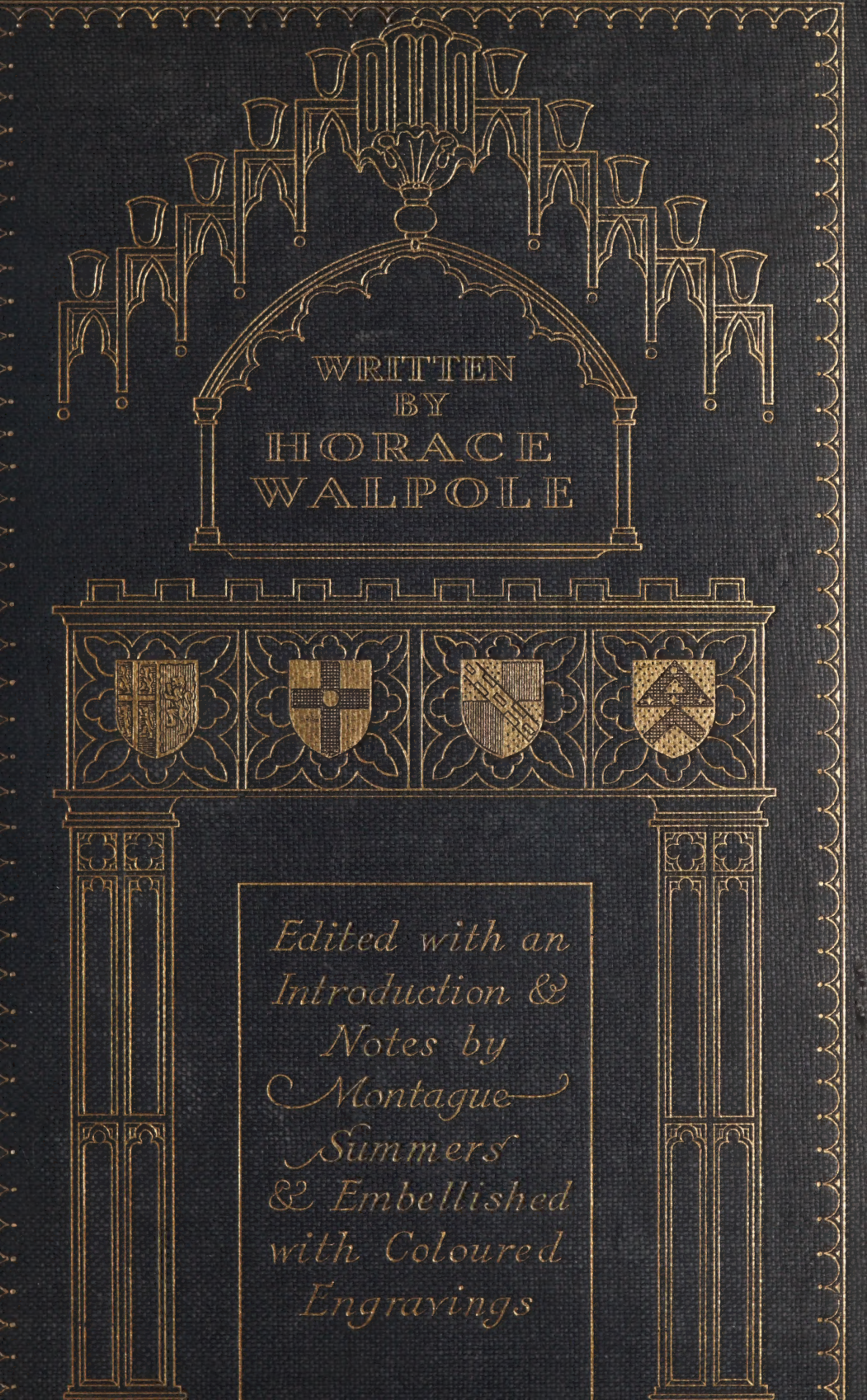


# THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO THE MYSTERIOUS MOTHER



WRITTEN  
BY  
HORACE  
WALPOLE



*Edited with an  
Introduction &  
Notes by  
Montague  
Summers  
& Embellished  
with Coloured  
Engravings*

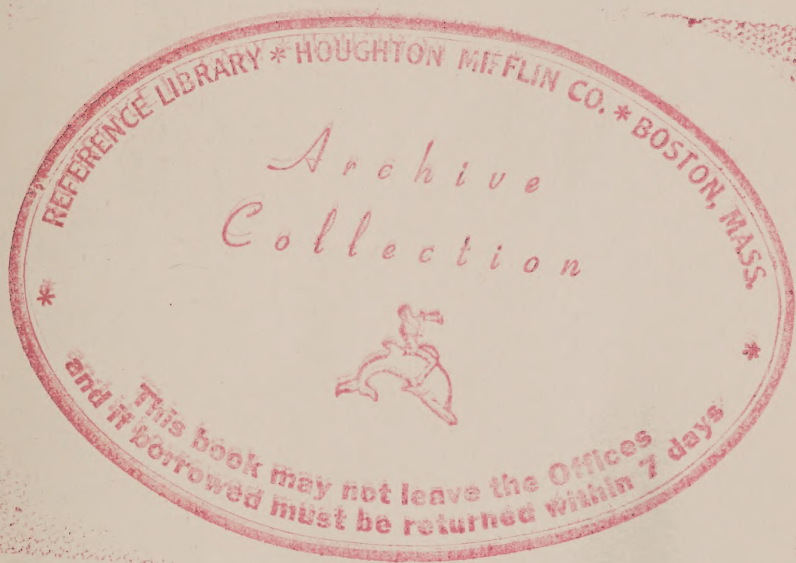














*The Castle of Oranto.*



CONSTABLE'S EDITION  
OF THE  
CASTLE OF OTRANTO  
AND THE  
MYSTERIOUS MOTHER

WRITTEN BY  
HORACE WALPOLE  
EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY  
MONTAGUE SUMMERS  
AND EMBELLISHED WITH SEVEN  
COLOURED ENGRAVINGS

LONDON:  
PRINTED AT THE CHISWICK PRESS FOR  
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1924

## NOTE ON THE BINDING

THE binding design of this edition of *The Castle of Otranto* and *The Mysterious Mother* is based on engravings of architectural ornament, made to illustrate a book written by Horace Walpole and entitled *A Description of the Villa of Mr. Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill, near Twickenham, Middlesex*.

The side-design is almost a facsimile of the engraving depicting the chimney-piece in the China room, of which Horace Walpole wrote : "The upper part of the chimney-piece is taken from a window of an ancient farm house, formerly Bradfield Hall, belonging to Lord Grimston in Essex ; the lower part from a chimney at Hurst Monceaux in Sussex : it is adorned with the arms of Talbot, Bridges, Sackville, and Walpole, the principal persons who have inhabited Strawberry Hill."

The spine-design is adapted from a portion of the engraved frontispiece to this same *Description of Strawberry Hill*.

*This edition is limited to 550 copies*



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## PREFATORY NOTE

ALTHOUGH there are reprints without number of *The Castle of Otranto*, a book of prime importance in the history of English literature, it is extraordinary to find that there has never been any attempt to edit this remarkable work. The various re-issues have more and more extensively modernized the text; both punctuation and spelling have been radically altered; the original italicization has disappeared. In fact, it is hardly too much to say that there has been no absolutely dependable edition since Walpole's death (1797). In the present reprint the text of the first issue "LONDON: Printed for THO. LOWNDS in Fleet-Street. MDCCLXV" has been exactly followed, and this has, moreover, been carefully collated with the Second Edition: "LONDON: Printed for WILLIAM BATHOE in the *Strand*, and THOMAS LOWNDS in *Fleet-Street*. M.DCC.LXV."

The coloured illustrations, which are here given, were first used (in a plain state) in the Italian translation by Giovanni Sivrac, London, 1795. They were then employed (coloured) by Jeffery in his edition of 1796, from the first issue of which they are now reproduced. A full account of these reprints will be found in the Early Bibliography of *The Castle of Otranto*.

Of *The Mysterious Mother* there seems to be no edition which is now easily accessible. The text here

presented is that of the first issue (of fifty copies), printed at Strawberry Hill, 1768. This has been collated with the texts of the first public edition, 1781; the edition of 1789; the Dublin edition, 1791; and Scott's edition, 1811. The Prologue and Epilogue, which do not occur in any of these, have been given from the text in the *Works of Horace Walpole*, 1798, vol. iv. In an Appendix are printed for the first time the alterations which William Mason made in this tragedy, an item of unique interest. These are from the original manuscript variations Horace Walpole noted in his own copy of *The Mysterious Mother*, which was kindly lent by Messrs. Maggs for the purpose of transcription. A full account of these alterations, as also of Walpole's fight to prevent pirated issues of *The Mysterious Mother* will be found in the Introduction.



## INTRODUCTION

IT is probable that throughout the whole history of literature there have been few more essential and far-reaching changes in general public taste than that complete revolution of thought and manner which was effected within a space of less than five-and-twenty years, the mid decades of the eighteenth century. During the reign of Pope, and, perhaps, even more particularly under the precise and chilly influence of Addison, that formality which is technically, but in truth none the less very erroneously, known under the misnomer Classicism, ruled supreme in the world of letters, and any spirit who dared to asperse and infringe, however slightly, the rules so exactly and so authoritatively defined was soon frowned, jeered, or hectored into submission and silence.

Laws, stringent as the code of the Medes and Persians, were imposed upon poetry and prose alike. All must be moulded to one pattern, all deftly fashioned after models which themselves brilliant, witty, and felicitous, undeniably attained a high degree of excellence, and a safe following of which, moreover, taught a thousand mediocre imitators of genius to turn out artificial periods evenly balanced and superficially exact as *The Spectator* or *The Guardian*; to rhyme neat couplets that haply might seem at a quick glance not too far removed from *Eloisa to Abelard* and

the Englished *Iliad*; but every paragraph and every line without a flicker of life or a spontaneous movement, wholly and devastatingly destitute of freedom, vigour, and warm humanity. And essayist and insipid poetaster frankly offered mean shoddy instead of the real rich material. These nullities have not lasted, but at the time they seemed much the same, and that was good enough.

It should be remarked that the representative literature which was so greatly in vogue during the first thirty years of the eighteenth century, poetry with its lack of spontaneity and emotion, its self-fettered imagination; the drama with its rhetoric and rigid rules; prose with its superficial clarity, its second-rate intellectualism; literature in all its practised varieties of expression, was not for a moment properly Classical. With Greek it had very little in common; tragedy tamely took from Rapin and Dacier the presumed unities of Aristotle, an author whom, alas! the French critics wofully misreported and misunderstood; poetry was tutored by the *Traité du poème épique* of René le Bossu; and sympathetic prose began forthwith to congeal in conventional ruts and channels. The only Latin master of literature was Horace, Horace of the Epistles and *De Arte Poetica*, Horace equipped with the velvet court-coat and mighty periwig of the "regent of Parnassus," Nicolas Boileau Despréaux. The Augustans held as their creed that all sound judgement and true wit are based upon the observation of Nature, and that the infallible standard for determining what is

“natural” is to be discovered by the study of the best works of the ancients, a field which they severely limited and arbitrarily interpreted. “La nature est admirable partout,” says La Bruyère, and he obviously considers that certain of the ancients represent it best. In fine Nature came to be little more than cold unemotional Reason and plain Common-Sense.

It is not to be surprised at that, beneath the barren but unquestioned domination of ideas such as these, in the early eighteenth century the word “Gothic,” which was to play so important a part in later days, was merely a term of reproach and contempt. That most objectionable of Philistines, Addison, is rabid when he approaches Siena: “There is nothing in this City so extraordinary as the Cathedral which . . . can only be look’d upon as one of the Master-pieces of *Gothic* Architecture. When a Man sees the prodigious Pains and Expence, that our Fore-fathers have been at in these barbarous Buildings, one can’t but fancy to himself what Miracles of Architecture they would have left us, had they only been instructed in the right way; for when the Devotion of those Ages was much warmer than it is at present, and the Riches of the People much more at the disposal of the Priests, there was so much Money consum’d on these *Gothic* Cathedrals, as would have finish’d a greater Variety of Noble Buildings, than have been rais’d either before or since that Time.” And this of the Duomo with its black and white striped marbles, memorials of the Sorrowful and Joyful Mysteries of the Madonna, whereby, as she told



S. Bridget "her life was ever divided between grief and happiness," the Duomo with the Capella del Voto, the bronze work of Beccafumi, Donatello's statue of S. John Baptist, Neroccio's S. Catherine, and the wonderful mosaics of that pavement!

Boileau, indeed, uses *gothique* in reprobation, and as early as 1695 Dryden in his critical preface to Du Fresnoy's *A Parallel of Poetry and Painting* (*De Arte Graphica*) precisely says: "All that has nothing of the Ancient gust is call'd a barbarous or Gothique manner." Echoing these very words Shaftesbury in his *Characters*, 1710, writes: "We are not so Barbarous or Gothick as they pretend." Burnet's *History of our Own Times* describes the temper of Charles XII as growing "daily more fierce and Gothick." "Ah Rustick, ruder than *Gothick*," cries Millamant to the blundering Sir Wilfull in *The Way of the World* (1700); and well-nigh half a century later Mrs. Western rebuked her irate brother with "O! more than Gothick ignorance!" *Tom Jones* vii, 3. In 1773 Mrs. Hardcastle complains of her spouse's "Gothic vivacity," and even as late as 1841 J. T. Hewlett spoke of eating dinner "at the gothic hour of one o'clock," *The Parish Clerk*.

The earliest occasion when this term, so long slandered and traduced, was amply and entirely vindicated is by Bishop Richard Hurd (1720-1808), whose important work, *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* was published anonymously in 1762. Herein the influence of Joseph and Thomas Warton is very distinctly marked, and it would hardly be an exaggera-

tion to say that each page shows the author to be their direct and convinced disciple. But he is something more, for he goes much farther than they had ventured openly to advance. His very first *Letter* boldly throws down the gauntlet with its opening words: "The ages, we call barbarous, present us with many a subject of curious speculation. What, for instance, is more remarkable than the Gothic CHIVALRY? or than the spirit of ROMANCE, which took its rise from that singular institution?" and presently he challengingly demands: "May there not be something in the Gothic Romance peculiarly suited to the views of a genius, and to the ends of poetry? And may not the philosophic moderns have gone too far, in their perpetual ridicule and contempt of it?" Plain words; and in *Letter VI* he must have horrified not a few of his contemporaries when, speaking of the manners of the feudal age, he coolly remarks that as Homer was a citizen of the world if he had known them he would have preferred them to Grecian manners, "And the grounds of this preference would, I suppose, have been, *the improved gallantry of the feudal times, and the superior solemnity of their superstitions.*" This last phrase is very remarkable, and strikes the key-note of much that was to follow. Again and again Hurd returns to the charge: "For the more solemn fancies of witchcraft and incantation the horrors of the Gothic [popular Tales] were above measure striking and terrible," . . . "And without more words you will readily apprehend that the fancies of our modern bards are not only more

gallant, but, on a change of the scene, more sublime, more terrible, more alarming, than those of the classic fablers. In a word, you will find that the *manners* they paint, and the *superstitions* they adopt, are the more poetical for being Gothic." Lord Shaftesbury is laughed out of court for the alacrity and self-complacency with which in his *Advice to an Author* he makes the *Gothic manner* the favourite object of his raillery. "For they are not the cold fancies of plebeian poets, but the golden dreams of Ariosto, the celestial visions of Tasso, that are thus derided." A little later occurs some very pointed criticism with regard to those who profess so exactly to follow what they are pleased to call Nature: "But the source of bad criticism, as universally of bad philosophy, is the abuse of terms. A poet, they say, must follow *Nature*; and by Nature we are to suppose can only be meant the known and experienced course of affairs in this world. Whereas the poet has a world of his own, where experience has less to do, than consistent imagination. He has, besides, a supernatural world to range in. He has Gods, and Faeries, and Witches, at his command, and,

O ! who can tell  
The hidden *pow'r* of herbes and might of magic spell ?  
SPENSER, B. i, C. 4.

Thus in the poet's world, all is marvellous and extraordinary; yet not *unnatural* in one sense, as it agrees to the conceptions that are readily entertained of these magical and wonder-working Natures. This



trite maxim of *following Nature* is further mistaken, in applying it indiscriminately to all sorts of poetry."

Here we have one of Hurd's strongest points. He never expresses himself narrowly, as one who wishes entirely to banish and disallow any school of poetry save the romantic; he freely acknowledges the legitimate claim and position of classical poetry, he merely refuses to grant it a monopoly and an exclusive tyranny of place and power. He urges and insists that Gothic poetry shall be judged by its own standards, by its own particular canons.

It is almost impossible to over-estimate the importance of Hurd's *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* in the history of criticism, an importance which does not, however, seem to be generally recognized, and one, moreover, of which he was himself largely unconscious. But the change thereafter was almost immediate. There had, of course, already been symptoms of a certain vacillation of fashion, but this transition was incalculably accelerated by the authoritative pronouncements and acknowledged learning of so eminent a man as Hurd. Not merely did a few scholars, a few poets, a handful of critics, echo his dicta and range themselves beneath his banner, but a Gothic flavour rapidly permeated all classes of society. In 1749, as we have already seen, Squire Western's sister used the epithet "Gothick" as a term of unqualified opprobrium and contempt; seventeen years later the wealthy Mrs. Heidelberg, "the very flower of delicacy and cream of politeness," invites Lord Ogleby to take a dish of tea or "a sullabub

warm from the cow" in her "little Gothic dairy, fitted up entirely in my own taste," whilst the old city merchant, Sterling, who apes luxury and courts the mode, builds a spire in a field against a tree to terminate the prospect—"One must always have a church, or an obelisk, or something to terminate the prospect, you know,"—and spends one hundred and fifty pounds to put his ruins in proper repair, so that "you would think them ready to tumble on your head." No doubt a very great many of these ideas were directly inspired by *The Castle of Otranto*, but Hurd had to a marked extent paved the way, although it remained for Walpole to popularize Gothicism by his romance, and to make it fashionable in society by his castle and collections at Strawberry Hill.

"If in the history of British art," declares Sir Charles Eastlake, *History of the Gothic Revival*, Chapter III, "there is one period more distinguished than another for its neglect of Gothic, it was certainly the middle of the eighteenth century." But "an author . . . appeared, to whose writings and to whose influence as an admirer of Gothic art we believe may be ascribed one of the chief causes which induced its present revival." This, of course, was Horace Walpole, and Eastlake continues: "It is impossible to peruse either the letters or the romances of this remarkable man without being struck by the unmistakable evidence which they contain of his Mediaeval predilections. His 'Castle of Otranto' was perhaps the first modern work of fiction which depended for its interest on the incidents of a

chivalrous age, and it thus became the prototype of that class of novel which was afterwards imitated by Mrs. Ratcliffe and perfected by Sir Walter Scott. The feudal tyrant, the venerable ecclesiastic, the forlorn but virtuous damsel, the castle itself, with its moats and drawbridge, its gloomy dungeons and solemn corridors, are all derived from a mine of interest which has since been worked more efficiently and to better profit. But to Walpole must be awarded the credit of its discovery and first employment.

“The position which he occupies with regard to art resembles in many respects that in which he stands as a man of letters. His labours were not profound in either field. But their result was presented to the public in a form which gained him rapid popularity both as an author and a *dilettante*. As a collector of curiosities he was probably influenced more by a love of old world associations than by any sound appreciation of artistic design.”

Coming in the context where they stand, these are pregnant sentences, and, indeed, the connexion between the Gothic Romance and Gothic Architecture is even closer and goes deeper than Sir Charles Eastlake realized. This is a point which, so far as I know, has never been at all appreciated, and yet it presents one of the most striking, if not one of the essential, features of the Gothic school of novelists. For in by far the greatest number of their works it would be true to say that the protagonist is not the plaintive and persecuted heroine, Elmira, Rosaline, Matilda; nor the handsome and gallant hero,



Theodore, Constantine, Rosalvo; nor the desperate and murderous villain, Montoni, Wolfran, Gondemar; nor even the darkly-scowling and mysterious monk, Father Heriome, Abbot Beneditto, Theodosius de Zulvin; but rather the remote and ruined castle with its antique courts, deserted chambers, pictured windows that exclude the light, haunted galleries amid whose mouldering gloom is heard the rustle of an unseen robe, a sigh, a hurried footfall where no mortal step should tread; the ancient manor, hidden away in the heart of a pathless forest, a home of memories of days long gone before when bright eyes glanced from casement and balcony over the rich domain, the huge-girthed oaks, the avenues and far-stretching vistas, the cool stream winding past the grassy lawns, but now tenanted only by a silver-headed retainer and his palsied dame; the huge fortress set high upon some spar of the Apennines, dark machicolated battlements and sullen towers which frown o'er the valleys below, a lair of masterless men, through whose dim corridors prowl armed bandits, whose halls ring with hideous revelry or anon are silent as the grave; the lone and secret convent amid the hills, ruled by some proud abbess whose nod is law, a cloister of which the terraces overlook vast precipices shagged with larch and darkened by the gigantic pine, whose silences are only disturbed by the deep bell that knolls to midnight office and prayer. It is the Castle itself which is the centre of Walpole's romance, and that he felt this to be the case is shown by a pertinent reference in his first

Preface: "The scene is undoubtedly laid in some real castle. The author seems frequently, without design, to describe particular parts. 'The chamber,' says he, 'on the right hand; the door on the left hand; the distance from the chapel to *Conrad's* apartment.' These and other passages are strong presumptions that the author had some certain building in his eye." The Castle of Udolpho—"Silent, lonely and sublime, it seemed to stand the sovereign of the scene, and to frown defiance on all, who dared to invade its solitary reign"—dominates Mrs. Radcliffe's most famous work, whilst she has few pages more pregnant with impressive suggestion than the opening of *A Sicilian Romance* which describes a traveller halting before the sombre and decaying ruins of the castle of Mazzini. It would be well-nigh impossible to enumerate the countless Gothic novels which have in their titles "Castle," "Abbey," "Priory," "Convent," "Church." The buildings seem to acquire a personality and an empery of their own. Mrs. Radcliffe's first romance was *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789); Mrs. Parsons wrote *The Castle of Wolfenbach* (1793), vouched for by Miss Andrews as being "horrid"; Charles Lucas published *The Castle of St. Donat's* (1799); *The Castle of Santa Fe* (1805) is by a "Clergyman's Daughter"; *The Castle of Tivoli* (1808), by J. F. Hughes. *The Abbey of Clugny* (1795) is by Mrs. Meeke; *The Abbey of St. Asaph* (1799) by Isabella Kelly. The prolific Miss Sarah Wilkinson is responsible for *The Priory of St. Clair* (1811); hers also are *The Convent*

of *the Grey Penitents* (1801), and *The Convent of St. Ursula* (1807). T. J. Horseley Curteis has a pseudo-historical romance, *St. Botolph's Priory; or, The Black Mask* (1806); and *The Church of St. Siffrid* (1797) is delicately anonymous. The list might be indefinitely, and even tediously, prolonged.

To repeat hackneyed and controversial expositions, to attach well-worn but unsatisfactory labels is easy but of scant value, so without attempting here to essay that most difficult, elusive, and thankless of tasks a comprehensive definition of the literary term "Gothic," it may be worth while briefly to touch upon a few of the characteristics of this school of romance.

There is in the Romantic revival a certain disquietude and a certain aspiration. It is this disquietude with earth and aspiration for heaven which inform the greatest Romance of all, Mysticism, the Romance of the Saints. The Classical writer set down fixed rules and precisely determined his boundaries. The Romantic spirit reaches out beyond these with an indefinite but very real longing to new and dimly guessed spheres of beauty. The Romantic writer fell in love with the Middle Ages, the vague years of long ago, the days of chivalry and strange adventure. He imagined and elaborated a mediaevalism for himself, he created a fresh world, a world which never was and never could have been, a domain which fancy built and fancy ruled. And in this land there will be mystery, because where there is mystery beauty may always lie hid. There will be wonder,



because wonder always lurks where there is the unknown. And it is this longing for beauty intermingling with wonder and mystery that will express itself, perhaps exquisitely and passionately in the twilight moods of the romantic poets, in the picturesque description of Italian landscapes and far-off mountain scenes, perhaps a little crudely and even a little vulgarly in tales of horror and blood.

The scene of the Gothic novel is very often laid in Italy, where Nature is most beautiful, where love and hate are hot, a land yet bathed in the glow of that Renaissance whence the great Elizabethans drew their noblest inspiration. Here were convents and banditti. The only counterpart at home to the brigand was the ruffianly highwayman, the Westons, Galloping Dick, Jerry Abershaw, the Beatsons, and Bob Snooks. Monks and friars had not been seen in England within the memory of living man. Little, or rather nothing, was known of the Orders, their rules, their devotions, their aims; and ignorance wove the most frantic fantasies. Who could find better actors for a novel than these mysterious figures, muffled in their cowls and scapularies, bound by awful vows, dark and threatening, with all the terror and all the power of the Church behind them? It is hardly necessary to remark how impossible and wildly imaginative are these Monks of Madrid (George Moore, 1802), legendary Monks of St. Benedict (1808), and Monks of Udolpho (T. J. Horseley Curteis, 1808), nay, Walpole's own Benedict, Martin, and Father Jerome. They are harmless enough, and we just accept them

as part of the stagecraft of that school. They need not disturb us any more than the lover who indites sonnets of sixteen and twenty lines, the talk about the opera as a fashionable amusement at Toulouse in the days of the League, the gilded salon where a heroine, who lives when Edward IV is king, receives a circle of her friends.

There is hardly a feature of the Gothic romance, certainly not a feature of any importance, that had not been employed, or, at least, adumbrated by Walpole in *The Castle of Otranto*, which is generally claimed, and may fairly be allowed, to be the parent of the romantic novel. It is true that Ann Radcliffe was to manage the material with far finer art, even with genius; whilst Charlotte Dacre is more flamboyant and sensational, and introduces erotics learned from Monk Lewis's pages, indiscretions of which *Otranto* knows nothing. But it was Walpole who first pointed the Gothic way.

That *The Castle of Otranto* had a predecessor in no way impugns Walpole's influence and position. In 1762 was published *Longsword, Earl of Salisbury. An Historical Romance*, in two volumes, the frontispiece to the first of which depicts the exterior of a Gothic fane, where a Religious assists a Knight. The author of the book, which appeared anonymously, was the Rev. Thomas Leland, D.D. (1722-1785), of Dublin, an Irish historian and classical scholar of repute. The action of *Longsword* takes place in the reign of Henry III, and the Advertisement is careful to declare that the outlines of the story "are to be found in the antient English historians." It must be

confessed that upon the whole it is poorly executed, but it is interesting as pointing forward far more distinctly to Sir Walter Scott than to Ann Radcliffe. It is, in fact, a novel of a school different from Walpole's progeny.

It is a fact at once curious and most remarkable that *The Castle of Otranto* was begun quite accidentally owing to a midsummer dream. Walpole commenced his story, writing for mere amusement, in June 1764, and finished it on the following 6th August. It was published in an edition of five hundred copies on Christmas Eve of the same year, the most apposite of days, and Walpole sending a letter to George Montagu says that it will reach him "with your muff, my *Anecdotes of Painting*, the fine pamphlet on libels, and the *Castle of Otranto*, which lost its maidenhead to-day. All this will make some food for your fireside." A copy was also dispatched to Cambridge, to Gray, who, having seen the manuscript, had strongly urged publication. On 30th December he writes in acknowledgement: "I have received the *Castle of Otranto*, and return you my thanks for it. It engages our attention here, makes some of us cry a little, and all in general afraid to go to bed o' nights. We take it for a translation; and should believe it to be a true story, if it were not for St. Nicholas." The success of his romance was immediate, and beyond all Walpole's expectations. "The enclosed novel is much in vogue," he says, sending the book to the Earl of Hertford on 27th January 1765, and a month later, 28th February, he confesses the secret to the Rev. William Cole, to



whom, in a letter dated 9th March, he gave an account of his original inspiration. "Your partiality to me and Strawberry have, I hope, inclined you to excuse the wildness of the story. You will ever have found some traits to put you in mind of the place. When you read of the picture quitting its panel, did you not recollect the portrait of Lord Falkland,<sup>1</sup> all in white, in my gallery? Shall I even confess to you, what was the origin of this romance? I waked one morning, in the beginning of last June, from a dream, of which all I could recover was, that I had thought myself in an ancient castle (a very natural dream for a head like mine filled with Gothic story) and that on the uppermost banister of a great staircase I saw a gigantic hand in armour. In the evening I sat down, and began to write, without knowing in the least what I intended to say or relate. The work grew on my hands and I grew fond of it that one evening, I wrote from the time I had drunk my tea, about six o'clock, till half an hour after one in the morning, when my hand and fingers were so weary, that I could not hold the pen to finish the sentence, but left Matilda and Isabella talking in the middle of a paragraph. In short I was so engrossed with my Tale, which I completed in less than two months."

A second edition of *The Castle of Otranto* was soon called for, and on 11th April 1765 an issue of five hundred copies appeared. In the Preface Walpole discards the mask, explains his reasons for pretending

<sup>1</sup> Henry Cary (died 1637), first Viscount Falkland. The picture was by Van Somer.

the book was a translation, and incontinently dismisses William Marshal and Canon Onuphrio Muralto. Writing to Mason six days later he frankly declares: " I published *The Castle of Otranto* with the utmost diffidence and doubt of its success. . . . Your praise is so likely to make me vain, that I oblige myself to recollect all the circumstances that can abate it, such as, the fear I had of producing it at all (for it is not everybody that may in this country play the fool with impunity); the hurry in which it was composed, and its being begun without any plan at all; for though in the short course of its progress, I did conceive some views, it was so far from being sketched out with any design at all, that it was actually commenced one evening, from the very imperfect recollection of a dream with which I waked in the morning. It was begun and finished in less than two months, and then I showed it to Mr. Gray, who encouraged me to print it."

The enthusiasm which greeted *The Castle of Otranto* permeated all ranks of society, and did not wane. Compliment and congratulation poured in upon the author. Signing himself " Philotrantus " Birch addressed the following lines in the *S. James Chronicle* " To the Hon. and Ingenious Author of the Castle of Otranto," and one specimen of contemporary praise may serve as a fair example of many:

Thou sweet Enchanter ! at whose Nod  
The airy Train of Phantoms rise ;  
Who dost but wave thy Potent Rod,  
And *Marble* bleeds, and *Canvas* sighs.

By thee decoy'd, with curious Fear  
 We tread thy *Castle's* dreary Round ;  
 Though horrid all we see and hear,  
 Thy Horrors charm while they confound.

Full well hast thou pursued the Road,  
 The Magic Road thy Master laid,  
 And hast, with grateful Skill, bestow'd  
 An Off'ring worthy of his Shade.

Again his Manners he may trace  
 Again his Characters may see,  
 In soft Matild Miranda's grace,  
 And his own Propero in thee,

In 1767 *The Castle of Otranto* was translated into French, and appeared in four volumes. Much of the dialogue, however, has been omitted, and the Amsterdam edition of 1777, *Le Château d'Otrante, Histoire Gothique. Traduite sur la seconde Edition Angloise par M.E.* will be found to be fuller and more exact. In 1791 at Parma was printed Bodoni's fine edition for J. Edwards, the well-known bookseller in Pall Mall, and three years later the romance was published at Berlin in the original English, ornamented with a series of charming illustrations. In January 1795 Giovanni Sivrac printed his Italian version, *Il Castello di Otranto, Storia Gotica*, "In Londra, Presso Molini, Polidori, Molini. Hay-Market." There are seven engravings designed "di una dama," who was Miss Clarke, the niece of Sir Charles Ratcliffe. These were used by Jeffery in his English edition of 1796, and have been here reproduced.

To-day it may seem difficult to understand the



overwhelming appeal of *The Castle of Otranto*. Modern taste will aver that there are passages which are rough, and, perchance, even slightly ridiculous. The thing has frequently been done since, and done much better. But, and herein lies the point, it had never been done before. *The Castle of Otranto* is literally an epoch-making book. And when we read its pages we shall surely find therein a certain charm, which, for all their superior cleverness and more adroit manipulation of the supernatural, is wholly lacking in many of *Otranto's* modern descendants. That there are details which can be criticized as too grotesque we candidly allow, but these gaucheries need not blind us to the real merit and dramatic power of the story, which holds our attention from the opening sentences.

The first direct and sustained imitation—for *Sir Bertrand* (1773) is only a fragment—of *The Castle of Otranto* was Clara Reeve's *The Champion of Virtue*, published in 1777, of which a second edition appeared in the following year as *The Old English Baron: A Gothic Story*. In the Preface to this later issue she immediately acknowledges that "This Story is the literary offspring of the Castle of Otranto, written upon the same plan, . . . it is distinguished by the appellation of a Gothic Story, being a picture of Gothic times and manners." The period of the tale is the early fifteenth century, in the minority of Henry the Sixth. Notwithstanding the parentage of her novel Miss Reeve, a prim and precise lady of fifty-three, does not hesitate to pronounce some pretty

severe philippics upon Walpole's work, concerning which she says "the opening excites the attention very strongly; the conduct of the story is artful and judicious; the characters are admirably drawn and supported; the diction polished and elegant; yet, with all these brilliant advantages, it palls upon the mind (though it does not upon the ear); and the reason is obvious, the machinery is so violent, that it destroys the effect it is intended to excite. Had the story been kept within the utmost *verge* of probability, the effect had been preserved, without losing the least circumstance that excites or detains the attention.

"For instance; we can conceive, and allow of, the appearance of a ghost; we can even dispense with an enchanted sword and helmet; but then they must keep within certain limits of credibility: A sword so large as to require an hundred men to lift it; a helmet that by its own weight forces a passage through a court-yard into an arched vault, big enough for a man to go through; a picture that walks out of its frame; a skeleton ghost in a hermit's cowl:—When your expectation is wound up to the highest pitch, these circumstances take it down with a witness, destroy the work of imagination, and, instead of attention, excite laughter. I was both surprised and vexed to find the enchantment dissolved, which I wished might continue to the end of the book; and several of its readers have confessed the same disappointment to me: The beauties are so numerous, that we cannot bear the defects, but want it to be perfect in all respects."

There is just enough of truth in these strictures to render them very unpalatable, but there seems a good deal of finicking cavil as well. It may be granted that the huge helmet and the Brobdingnagian sword are a little extravagant, but this is surely excusable in a pioneer work, a novel essay; and although the machinery be something violent, Walpole has managed it with such skill and invested it with such glamour of mediaeval remoteness (unhistorical, of course, to a degree, but this is impertinent), that a little crudity may be condoned, nay, I do not know whether it does not add to the strength and surprise of the narrative.

The portrait which quits its panel and descends on the floor seems to me a most striking incident, and he who finds it here too improper a prodigy must be singularly lacking in imagination and fancy. As Sir Walter Scott observes: "There are few who have not felt, at some period of their childhood, a sort of terror from the manner in which the eye of an ancient portrait appears to fix the spectator from every point of view." It is incredible that Walpole should have had to write to Antony Highmore, as to a particularly stupid child, and laboriously explain his ideas: "I intended to describe the figure as detaching itself not only from the frame but from the ground. It would be more awkward to suppose the whole picture walking and not the mere figure itself." Later writers have not forgotten this, and in Mr. E. F. Benson's grim tale, *The Judge's House*, at midnight in the lone mansion amid the howling of the storm the

portrait of the hanging judge steps from the frame, and, rope in hand, black cap on head, confronts the student who shakes and trembles at the threatening horror. "In the centre of the picture was a great irregular patch of brown canvas, as fresh as when it was stretched on the frame. The background was as before, with chair and chimney-corner and rope, but the figure of the Judge had disappeared. . . . There, on the great high-backed carved oak chair sat the judge in his robes of scarlet and ermine, with his baleful eyes glaring vindictively, and a smile of triumph on the resolute, cruel mouth, as he lifted with his hands a *black cap* . . . and at the last stroke of midnight he placed the black cap on his head."

As might have been certainly expected Walpole was not a little nettled by the crassness of the estimable and prosaic Miss Reeve. On 22nd August 1778 he writes to the Reverend William Cole with reference to *The Old English Baron*: "It is not all oblique; but though mixed with high compliments, directly attacks the visionary part, which, says the author or authoress, makes one laugh. I do assure you I have not had the smallest inclination to return that attack. It would even be ungrateful, for the work is a professed imitation of mine, only stripped of the marvellous, and so entirely stripped, except in one awkward attempt at a ghost or two, that it is the most insipid dull nothing you can read. It certainly does not make me laugh: for what makes one doze, seldom makes one merry." Upon another occasion he further remarked: "I cannot compliment *The*



*Old English Baron*. It was totally void of imagination and interest; had scarce any incidents; and though it condemned the marvellous admitted a ghost. I suppose the author thought a tame ghost might come within the laws of probability."

Walpole's criticism is not unjust. *The Old English Baron* is a dull and didactic narrative told in a style of chilling mediocrity. It is impossible to be interested in the events, and the hero, Edmund Twyford, the reputed son of a cottager, who is "modest, yet intrepid; gentle and courteous to all; frank and unreserved to those that loved him, discreet and complaisant to those who hated him; generous and compassionate to the distresses of his fellow-creatures in general; humble, but not servile, to his patron and superiors," is, truth to tell, an unconscionable bore. The fair Lady Emma, "with tears on her cheek, sweetly blushing, like the damask rose, wet with the dew of the morning," forms a worthy partner to this prig. Yet *The Old English Baron* achieved no small fame and popularity, and in 1800 it was translated into French. It was even dramatized as *Edmond, Orphan of the Castle*, a tragedy published anonymously, 8vo, 1799, an utterly worthless production composed in a miserable hobble that aims at blank verse. It was probably refused by the theatres, in any case it was never acted.

Far different was the dramatic career of *The Castle of Otranto*.

In his additional notes to Pope's *Works* Bishop Warburton had already observed with no little acumen

that "the plan of *The Castle of Otranto* was regularly a drama," "an intention," says Walpole, "I am sure I do not pretend to have conceived; nor, indeed, can I venture to affirm that I had any intention at all but to amuse myself—no, not even a plan, till some pages were written." Robert Jephson, however, profiting by the hint of the discerning prelate, occupied himself during the autumn of 1779 with fitting Walpole's romance for the stage, and when he had completed his script duly submitted it for approval to Thomas Sheridan, erstwhile manager of the Theatre Royal, Dublin, but who had now settled in London, where his house in Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, was the rendezvous of many eminent literary men and the most distinguished actors of the day. Jephson was born in Ireland in 1736, and for some time had been captain of an infantry regiment on the Irish establishment. This was reduced, and he retired on half-pay to fix his residence in England, where he enjoyed the friendship of Johnson, Burke, Garrick, Goldsmith, Reynolds, Burney, and their circle. In 1767, however, he returned to Ireland, having recently married a daughter of Sir Edward Barry, and obtained the post of Master of the Horse to the Lord-Lieutenant, Viscount Townshend, whose administration he wittily defended in the pages of a Dublin newspaper, *The Mercury*, his reward being a permanent pension of three hundred a year, a sum subsequently doubled. Jephson, who retained his office under twelve successive Viceroys, and sat in the parliament of Ireland as representative of Old Leighlin, died from paralysis

at his Blackrock country house, near Dublin, 31st May 1808.

In 1779 he was already well known and highly esteemed as a dramatist of mark. At Drury Lane, 17th February 1775, his first tragedy, *Braganza*, with Smith as Velasquez, Reddish as the Duke, and Mrs. Yates, Louisa, Duchess of Braganza, had been produced amid scenes of great enthusiasm—the audience “clapped, shouted, huzzaed, cried bravo, and thundered out applause.” It was performed no less than fifteen times that season. The boxes, indeed, were taken for twenty-five nights, but it proved impossible to give it so frequently. The plot is to some extent founded upon the Premonstratensian Abbé René Aubert de Vertot D’Aubeuf’s *Histoire des Révolutions de Portugal*, Paris, 1711, which is an augmented edition of the *Histoire de la Conjuration de Portugal* (en 1640), Paris, 1689. The book was translated into English; *la Conjuration* 1700, the *Révolutions* 1712; and it ran through many editions during the eighteenth century. *Braganza* has some striking scenes, one episode in particular is very horrible, and Walpole, who wrote the epilogue, which was spoken by Mrs. Yates, addressed to Jephson three published letters expressing his admiration. In 1776, to Walpole’s great annoyance, Garrick refused *Vitellia*, Jephson’s second play, and it appears not to have been acted until the winter of 1796, when on 15th November it was produced at Drury Lane under a new title, *The Conspiracy*, with Kemble as Sextus and Mrs. Siddons *Vitellia*. This drama, founded on

Metastasio's *La Clemenza di Tito*, was printed at Dublin, 8vo, 1796. Of *Vitellia* Walpole, after scanning the manuscript, enthusiastically cried: "What could I say that would carry greater weight than 'This piece is by the author of *Braganza*'?"

*The Law of Lombardy*, which Walpole read with delight and praised with unwonted warmth, although he hints that the language is perhaps "too rich," Jephson dedicated, when published, to the king. The play was originally acted at Drury Lane, 8th February 1779, and repeated about ten times that season. The main incident is borrowed from Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, V, the story of Ginevra, the Scottish princess, and Lurcanio.

Walpole writing to Jephson from Berkeley Square, 25th January 1780, says that he has sent to Sheridan for the manuscript of *The Count of Narbonne*, which he at once read through rapidly, but with attention. He suggests a few trifling alterations, and is warm in his commendations of the play, expressing his regret "that neither my talents nor health allow me to offer to supply you with prologue and epilogue. Poetry never was my natural turn; and what little propensity I had to it, is totally extinguished by age and pain." In July 1781 Walpole wrote to Thomas Harris, the manager of Covent Garden, strongly recommending the new drama, but there was a little delay, partly owing to the temporary absence of Harris from London, partly because other persons had concerned themselves in the affair and by pulling opposite strings brought about a certain



amount of stupid friction. *The Count of Narbonne*, however, went into rehearsal at Covent Garden on 7th November, and Walpole, who had promised to advise upon the scenery, dresses, and other properties, came up to London on purpose to be present. The dress rehearsal on Friday, 16th November, proved a great trial, and those who have had experience of these harassments will sympathize with his cry: "I have been tumbling into trap-doors, seeing dresses tried on in the green-room, and directing armour in the painting room, and all this with such a throbbing head that I was tempted to rest myself in Covent Garden churchyard, and bilk both the great stage and the little one."

Produced on Saturday 17th November, *The Count of Narbonne* proved a veritable triumph. "I never saw a more unprejudiced audience, nor more attention," writes Walpole to the author, "and the plaudit was great and long when given out again for Monday. . . . The prologue was exceedingly liked; and, for effect, no play ever produced more tears." The cast was as follows: Raymond (Manfred), Count of Narbonne, Wroughton; Austin (Jerome), a Priest, Henderson; Theodore, Lewis; Fabian, an old Servant of the Count, Thompson; Hortensia (Hippolita), the Countess, Miss Younge; Adelaide (Matilda), Miss Satchell; Jacqueline (Bianca), Mrs. Morton. Miss Younge, in particular, established herself as "a great mistress of her profession, mistress of dignity, passion, and of all the sentiments" the poet put into her hands. "The applause to one of her

speeches lasted a minute, and recommenced twice before the play could go on." But Walpole himself was very tired, and on Sunday morning he pathetically writes a little note from Berkeley Square to Seymour Conway: "I have been here again for three days, tending and nursing and waiting on Mr. Jephson's play. I have brought it into the world, was well delivered of it, it can stand on its own legs—and I am going back to my own quiet hill, never likely to have anything more to do with theatres."

When *The Count of Narbonne* was played at Dublin in the winter of 1781-2 John Philip Kemble made a great hit as Raymond, and Jephson became very friendly with the actor. On 8th March 1787, Kemble appeared as Raymond at Drury Lane with Mrs. Siddons as Hortensia. On 22nd March 1790, at Covent Garden, *The Count of Narbonne*, announced as "Not acted 6 years" (at that house) was given for the benefit of Mrs. Pope, Hortensia. On this occasion Holman played Theodore and the beautiful Louisa Brunton, afterwards Countess of Craven, Adelaide. At Drury Lane, 30th April 1798, Mrs. Jordan, for her benefit, acted Adelaide, with Kemble as the Count, Mrs. Siddons, Hortensia. At Covent Garden, 5th November 1807, Kemble and Mrs. Siddons were again seen in these favourite rôles. In December 1786 there was produced at Covent Garden a "Pantomime Entertainment," the libretto by Miles Peter Andrews, whom Gifford has so mercilessly scarified, and the music by Shields, a strange olio of *The Castle of Otranto* and Miss Aikin's frag-

ment, *Sir Bertrand*. Miss Wilkinson was the Colombine, and the chequered medley took extraordinarily well, being acted nearly fifty times during that season.

On Monday, 24th April 1848, by way of an "Easter novelty," there was produced at the Haymarket "a grand romantic extravaganza" in one act, *The Castle of Otranto*, by Gilbert A'Beckett. This vapid burletta, a thing of an hour and twenty minutes in the performing, was sandwiched between Morton's *Old Honesty* and *Lavater the Physiognomist*. Keeley buffooned Manfred, a stout little man in velvet; Priscilla Horton played Theodore; and Mrs. W. Clifford, Hippolita. *The Times* critic, although evidently misliking the violent caricature, says that "When the curtain fell, a sentence of approbation was given in from all sides. . . . The acting was very good." To us this travesty, delivered in rhymes which alternately hobble slow with shambling gait and clink briskly with tinnified jingle, seems indescribably weak. Even if one fairly remembers that there is no more ephemeral form of play than theatrical burlesque, even if every allowance be made for the evaporation of the current jokes, the up-to-date slang, the topical and political allusions, the remainder is stale, and even carious, dry bones and dust.

*The Count of Narbonne* may be pronounced a good play, and Jephson has managed his difficult material with no little skill. The miraculous casque is entirely eliminated, and, although it is true we can be

but mildly interested in a character who does not appear upon the scene, the omission of Isabella allows the dramatist to concentrate with greater effect upon Theodore and Adelaide (Matilda), so that the spectator is not required to dissipate his sympathies. The catastrophe is touching and natural, and in the theatre should be very effective. The verse is facile and flexible, often melodious, sometimes forcible and even genuinely impressive.

But interesting as Jephson's tragedy is it must be confessed far inferior to Walpole's own work, *The Mysterious Mother*, which was finished 15th March 1768. It had been begun on Christmas Day two years before, but was completely laid aside for many months during Walpole's visit to Paris, and whilst he was busy with his *Historic Doubts on Richard III*, which was published 1st February 1768. On 15th April 1768 Walpole writes to George Montagu: "I have finished my tragedy, but as you would not bear the subject I will say no more of it, but that Mr. Chute, who is not easily pleased, likes it, and Gray, who is still more difficult, approves it. I am not yet intoxicated enough to think it would do for the stage, though I wish to see it acted; but as Mrs. Pritchard leaves the stage next month, I know nobody could play the Countess: nor am I disposed to expose myself to the impertinence of that jackanapes Garrick, who lets nothing appear but his own wretched stuff, or that of creatures still duller, who suffer him to alter their pieces as he pleases. I have written an Epilogue *in character* for the Clive, which



she could speak admirably—but I am not so sure she would like to speak it. Mrs. Conway, Lady Ailesbury, Lady Lyttleton, and Miss Rich are to come hither the day after to-morrow, and Mr. Chute and I are to read my play to them; for I have not strength enough to go through the whole alone.”

That Garrick would have refused *The Mysterious Mother* is almost certain, for Davies, in his *Dramatic Miscellanies* (1783), vol. ii, tells us: “Soon after his present Majesty’s accession Mr. Garrick intended to have brought forward to the public the *King and no King* of Beaumont and Fletcher. Bessus was given to Woodward; the manager designed Arbaces for himself. They both appeared to be much pleased with the prospect of giving the public diversion, and gaining great applause in the representation of two characters new to the stage. . . . But, however eager the manager was to bring out this play at first, it was observed, that, at every reading of it in the green-room, his pleasure, instead of increasing, suffered a visible diminution. His usual vivacity at last forsook him; he looked grave and stroked his chin, which, to the courtiers amongst the players, who knew their monarch was his own minister, was a convincing sign of his being dissatisfied with the business that was going forward. At length he fairly gave up the design of acting *King and no King*; the parts were withdrawn from the actors, and no more was heard of it.

“The cause of this sudden resolution was not known, though the conjectures were various. Some

thought the title carried an objection. . . . Others thought the impropriety of the story, on which the play was founded, was a great defect.

“Two reasons, above all others, I believe, prevailed on the manager to drop this play. The King’s strange and contradictory agitations of mind are not otherwise to be accounted for than from his ardent passion to a lady whom he supposes to be his sister: this belief raises him sometimes into fits of frenzy. A play, founded upon incest, or anything repugnant to nature, even in supposition, can never please an English audience.—Why is Dryden’s *Don Sebastian* almost banished our theatres? The progress of the play, to a glorious fourth act, promises a noble catastrophe. In the fifth act, the two lovers, *Sebastian* and *Almeyda*, are discovered to be brother and sister. After exchanging amorous glances and warm wishes, approaching to lasciviousness, in the rich eloquence of Dryden’s harmonious verses, they are obliged to part for ever. The *Unnatural Combat* of Massinger, one of his most finished pieces, is for ever excluded the theatre for a like reason. Smith’s *Phædra* and *Hippolitus* was coldly entertained, at the first acting of it, with all the powers of *Betterton* and *Booth*, *Barry* and *Oldfield*, to support it: and could never win an audience in a revival.

“But another very powerful reason for not acting *King and no King* prevailed, I am persuaded, with a man of *Garrick*’s reflection. He did not choose to hazard the obtruding such a character on the public as *Bessus*, who, though a captain in the army, is not

only a beaten and disgraced coward, but a voluntary pandar; a wretch who offers to procure a lady for the king his master, supposed, by him, to be his own sister."

The genius of Hannah Pritchard (1711-1768) who, says Charles Dibdin, "was everywhere great, everywhere impressive, and everywhere feminine," won especial admiration in the rôle of Lady Macbeth, which she played with an excellence that fully equalled, if it did not surpass, Garrick's acting of Macbeth. It was in this tragedy that she took her farewell of the stage, 24th April 1768.

Although later he emphatically denied such was ever the case, there seems no doubt that at first Walpole played with the idea of a public production of *The Mysterious Mother*. Who dissuaded him therefrom, or why he so entirely and abruptly changed his mind, does not exactly appear, but when Mason had submitted to him the variations made in the text to fit the play for the theatre, he definitely asserts in his letter of thanks and acknowledgement, 11th May 1769, "I cannot think of the stage." That this change of front would vex Mason sorely he was perfectly aware, since he employs the suavest address and most honied compliments in speaking of the alterations "with which I am so much pleased that I shall correct my own copy by them. I accept with great thankfulness what you have voluntarily been so good as to do for me; and should *The Mysterious Mother* ever be performed when I am dead, it will owe to you its presentation." In the present edition

of the play these alterations are printed for the first time from Walpole's own copy.

*The Mysterious Mother* was printed at Strawberry Hill in an edition of fifty copies, 1768, and these were distributed to a few favoured friends with the strictest injunctions of secrecy and trust. But however limited the circulation the tragedy, as indeed so fine a piece of work well deserved, became known; it was lent, and much admired. Requests were continually being made for copies, and diffidently refused. Having taken his theme and having used it with such force and real tragic power it is extraordinary to find that he was timorous and abashed. In 1776 Lady Di Beauclerk made seven large drawings for scenes in *The Mysterious Mother*, an attention which delighted the author. But Mason had by no means relinquished the possibility of a production, and this he continually urged, at last roundly declaring that his pains were wasted, his trouble thrown away. Upon 16th March 1778, Walpole writes to him, in a plain and uncompromising fashion enough: "You accuse me very unjustly of neglecting your alteration of my tragedy. I always thought it magic to be effected by so few words, and should have adopted it had I ever had thoughts of its being represented; but nothing could induce me to venture it on the stage. . . . I think this country at present in every light the sink of Europe; void of taste and of everything ingenuous."

It seems that *The Mysterious Mother* would not even have been published save for the merest happy accident. From one of the copies that had been lent



somebody made copious extracts, and in April 1781 John Henderson, the actor, overheard a whisper which asserted these were already at a publisher's in full train. He instantly communicated with Walpole, whose anxiety and vexation knew no bounds. "Can it be stopped?" he feverishly asks Henderson, and 6th May 1781 he addresses an almost pitiable letter to Mason: "Do you know I am in great distress? My *Mysterious Mother* has wandered into the hands of booksellers, and has been advertised with my name without my knowledge." After three weeks of worry and pother he decided that the situation would be best met by boldly publishing the play himself, as this would not merely prevent the issue of any spurious editions—for news had come that the book had been advertised in Dublin as well—but also satisfy the continual importunities of his friends and admirers. Accordingly, early in June 1781 Dodsley received *The Mysterious Mother*, and it was forthwith issued in a public edition. Mason wrote hastily to ask that the text should be given with his emendations, but Walpole put him off with a palpable excuse, no doubt justly preferring that the copy should be as he originally intended it.

Curiously enough, ten years later, in February 1791, a Dublin bookseller prepared to re-issue *The Mysterious Mother* without the author's knowledge or consent, but the Earl of Charlemont hastily interposed to prevent this publication. Walpole, however, by now was indifferent, and whilst thanking the Earl

for his courtesy and friendliness, he says that the play must take its fate, so tacitly permits the new edition, which accordingly soon appeared from the press, introduced by a well-written and excellent little preface. This concludes as follows: "Of the present tragedy we may boldly pronounce, that for nervous, simple, and pathetic language, each appropriated to the several persons of the drama; for striking incidents; for address in conducting the plot; and for consistency of character uniformly preserved through the whole piece it is equal, if not superior, to any play of the present century."

In a letter from Strawberry Hill, 4th April 1791, to Joseph Cooper Walker, Walpole, who has received a copy of the new impression, with perfect equanimity notes a few misprints he has found, and duly corrects them. He even troubles to explain that "In my original, in the second line of the first scene, was *chill* not *dull*, as *chilling* is more productive of fear than *dulling* is."

Walpole tells us that he derived his story from an anecdote he had once heard concerning John Tillotson, who was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1691 to 1694. Similar themes, however, are found in all literatures and can be traced to an immense antiquity.

In classic lore the Oedipus Saga enthralled the imagination of the greatest poets, and inspired dramas amongst the world's masterpieces. Later forms of the tale may be read in Suidas and Cedrenus.

The extraordinary legend of S. Gregory, based on some folk-tale of consanguinity and love, the hero of

which, however, is innocent throughout, was widely diffused through mediaeval Europe. It forms number eighty-one of the *Gesta Romanorum*. There is an old English poem<sup>1</sup> on the subject, and it also received lyric treatment at the hands of the German Meister-singer, Hartmann von Aue. An Italian story, *Il Figliuolo di germani*; the Latin chronicle of S. Albinus, of which the Reverend William Cole sent Walpole a manuscript; and the Serbian romaunt of the Holy Foundling Simeon embody germane circumstances.

Walpole has remarked the similarity of the history related in the *Heptameron* (Troisiesme Journée, nouvelle xxx) to the incidents upon which he himself founded his scenes. Marguerite of Navarre died 21st December 1549, and the *Heptameron*, which seems to have been composed between 1544 and 1548, was first published in 1558. The rubric of the novel is: "Un jeune Gentil homme, aagé de quatorze à quinze ans, pensant coucher avec l'une des Demoiselles de sa mère, coucha avec elle mesme, qui au bout de neuf moys accoucha, du fait de son filz, d'une fille, que douze ou treize ans après il épousa, ne sachant qu'elle fût sa fille et sa sœur, ny elle qu'il fût son père et son frère." Millin, *Antiquités Nationales* (t. iii, cf. xxviii, p. 6), speaking of the Collegiate Church of Ecouis, says that in the midst of the nave

<sup>1</sup> There are three MSS.: *Vernon MS.*, Oxford, edited by Horstmann; *MS. Cott.*, *Gleop. D. ix*, British Museum; *Auchinleck MS.*, Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, edited with glossary by F. Schultz, 1876.

there was a prominent marble tablet with this epitaph:

Cy-git l'enfant, cy-git le père,  
Cy-git la sœur, cy-git le frère,  
Cy-git la femme, et le mary,  
Et ne sont que deux corps icy.

The tradition ran that a son of "Madame d'Ecouis avait eu de sa mère sans la connaître et sans en être reconnu une fille nommée Cécile. Il épousa ensuite en Lorraine cette même Cécile qui était auprès de la Duchesse de Bar. . . . Ils furent enterrés dans le même tombeau en 1512 à Ecouis." An old sacristan used to supply curious visitors to the church with a leaflet detailing the narrative.

The same story is repeated in various localities and attached to other parishes. At Alincourt, a village between Amiens and Abbeville, the following lines are deep carved on a grave:

Ci git le fils, ci git la mère,  
Ci git la fille avec le père,  
Ci git la sœur, ci git le frère,  
Ci git la femme et le mari,  
Et ne sont pas que trois corps ici.

This rhyme is quoted in the *Trésor des Almanachs*, Paris, 1781. Gaspard Meturas, in his *Hortus Epitaphium Selectorum*, 12mo, 1648, gives a very similar inscription, and says it is to be found in a church at Clermont, Auvergne.

Bandello, whose *Novelle* first appeared at Lucca, 4to, 1554, has a famous story, Part II, 35, "un



gentiluomo navarrese sposa una, che era sua sorella e figliuola, non lo sappendo," which is almost precisely the same as that in the *Heptameron*. As the good Bishop declares that it was related to him by a lady living in the district, it is probable that some current tradition furnished both him and the Queen of Navarre with these horrible incidents, and that neither copied from the other. Julio de Montalban, a Spanish writer of the sixteenth century, says that a similar story was related to him when he was in the Bourbonnois, where the inhabitants pointed out the house which had been the scene of these morbid passions. In Luther's *Colloquia Mensalia*, under the article "Auricular Confession," the occurrence is said to have taken place at Erfurt in Germany.

Masuccio, *Il Novellino*, xxiii, has a story which commences in very similar fashion to that of Bandello, who was imitated in Spanish, *Sucesos y Prodigios de Amor—La Mayor confusion*; in Latin by D. Otho Melander; and he also gave Desfontaines the theme of his romance, *L'Inceste Innocent; histoire véritable*, Paris, Quinet, 8vo, 1644. A similar tale is touched upon in *Amadis de Gaul*, and in a later century we have *Le Criminel sans le savoir, roman historique et poetique*, 12mo, Paris and Amsterdam, 1783. It is further found in Giovanni Brevio's *Rime e Prose Volgari*, novella 4, Rome, 8vo, 1545; and in Tommaso Grappulo (Grappulino) *Il Convito Borghesiano*, novella 7, London, 1800, where its insertion was, perhaps suggested by the *Mysterious Mother*. A cognate legend is *Le Dit du Buef* and *Le Dit de la Bourjosee*

*de Rome* (ed. Jubinal, *Nouveau Recueil* ; and *Nouveau Recueil du Sénateur de Rome* . . . ed. Méon). Again the *Leggenda di Vergogna*, cura A. D'Ancona, Bologna, 1869, repeats the same catastrophe. It is also related in Byshop's *Blossoms*.

A similar story to Walpole's is told in the writings of the Calvinistic divine, William Perkins (1558-1602), sometime Rector of S. Andrew's, Cambridge.

There are a number of old English novels which have consanguinity as their theme. Such a one is Mrs. Behn's *The Dumb Virgin ; or, the Force of Imagination*, where the brother and sister who love are unknown to each other as relatives. There is also "*The Illegal Lovers ; a True Secret History. Being an Amour Between a Person of Condition and his Sister. Written by One who did reside in the Family,*" 8vo, 1728. After the death of his wife, Bellario falls in love with his sister Lindamira. Various sentimental letters pass between the two, and eventually Bellario in despair pistols himself. The lady lives to wed another admirer. The tale was obviously suggested by the famous *Love Letters between a Nobleman and his Sister*, supposed to have passed between Forde, Lord Grey, and his sister-in-law, Lady Henrietta Berkeley.

It will be remembered that in Lewis's somewhat ghoulish romance, *The Monk*, Ambrosio, after having enjoyed Antonia, to whose bedchamber he has gained admittance by demoniacal aid, discovers that she is his sister, and heaping crime upon crime, to sorcery and rape he has added incest. In *Ancient Records*, or,

*The Abbey of Saint Oswythe*, a romance by T. J. Horsley Curteis, Minerva Press, 1801, Lord Rudolph, the villain, seizes Matilda, the wife of his brother, Lord Alfred of Edmerville, upon whom he inflicts unheard-of sufferings. In yet another Gothic novel, Francis Lathom's *Astonishment!!!*, Longman, 1802, the wanton Viola is all too warmly wooing young Claudio, when she perceives the mysterious bracelet upon his arm, and recognizes that he is her long-lost son.

The somewhat morbid theme of overwhelming passion barred by consanguinity eventually discovered to be false occurs more than once in the later Jacobean and Carolan drama. In Beaumont and Fletcher's fine tragi-comedy, *A King and No King* (1611; 4to, 1619) we have Arbaces enamoured of Panthea, his reputed sister; similar motives are expressed in Arthur Wilson's *The Swizzer* (1631); but in Middleton's *Women beware Women* (circa 1612; 4to, 1657), founded upon *The True History of the Tragicke Loves of Hipolito and Isabella, Neapolitans*, 8vo, 1628 (second edition, 8vo, 1632), no contrivance can legitimize the incestuous loves of Hippolito and Isabella, and death is the only solution. In Massinger's *The Unnatural Combat* (1621; 4to, 1639), the demoniac Malefort pursues his daughter Theocrine with the same baleful fires as Francesco Cenci looked upon Beatrice.

But the height of horror, harrowing the very soul with pity and anguish, culminates in Ford's *Tis Pitty Shees a Whore*, than which the English language has

no greater tragedy. This masterpiece was produced by Queen Henrietta's Company at the Phoenix (or Cockpit) Theatre, probably in the autumn of 1631, and printed quarto, 1633. Wolff considers that Ford is indebted to a Norman history given by the chronicler Pierre Mathieu in his *Histoire de France et des Choses Memorables*, Paris, 1606, and thence retold by François de Rosset in *Les Histoires Tragiques de Nostre Temps*, where it is the fifth tale in the second edition, 1615. Dr. W. Barry finds a possible source is the *Περὶ ἐρωτικῶν παθημάτων* of Parthenios of Nikaia (*floruit* 30 B.C.?); and Professor Sherman thinks that Sperone Speroni's famous tragedy, *Canace e Macareo* derived from Ovid's *Heroides*, Epistola XI, is a striking analogue. No doubt Ford was acquainted with Speroni's work, the first authentic edition of which is 1546, and there are, it must be allowed, some fairly close and interesting parallelisms, but one may well hesitate to assert that *Tis Pitty Shees a Whore* owes aught (save the barest suggestions) to any of the above. It is, indeed, far more probable that he was influenced by the *cause célèbre* of May 1631, when an Ecclesiastical Court, over which no less than eight bishops presided, imposed the heaviest penalties upon Sir Giles Allington "for intermarrying with Dorothy Dalton, daughter of Michael Dalton and his wife, which latter was half-sister to Sir Giles." Mead writes: "It was the solemnest, the gravest and the severest censure that ever, they say, was made in that court." In this connexion the production of *Pericles*, which was acted



by the King's Company at the Globe, 10th June 1631, was obviously a topical revival.

Incest has its part amid the hideous lusts of that Renaissance court which Cyril Tournear paints in *The Revenger's Tragedy*, 4to, 1607; it suddenly startles us again in one scene of Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Captaine*, acted before the King, 1612-13. But in Brome's *The Love-Sick Count, or, The Ambitious Politique*, 8vo, 1658, the supposedly incestuous passion, which is a subsidiary element in the play, is shown, in the last act, to be innocent by convenient disclosures on the part of Thymele and the old midwife Garula.

In the Restoration Theatre the theme of consanguinity was originally dealt with no less than four times by Dryden: in lighter mood, in *The Spanish Fryar; or, The Double Discovery*, produced at Dorset Garden, March 1679-80, when Lorenzo—after all the love-brokerage of pursy Father Dominic—discovers Elvira to be his sister; tragically, in *Aureng-Zebe*, a heroic drama produced at Drury Lane in 1675, where the old Emperor, Aureng-Zebe, and Morat; a father, son, and stepson; are all rivals for Indamora's love, whilst Nourmahal, the Empress, is in love with her stepson, Aureng-Zebe; and again in *Don Sebastian*, produced at Drury Lane in the winter of 1689, when Sebastian and Almeyda are separated by the disclosures of old Alvarez; sentimentally and romantically, in *Love Triumphant; or, Nature will Prevail*, Dryden's last play, produced at Drury Lane in 1693, when Alphonso wins Victoria whom he has

long loved, even whilst she was thought to be his sister. Otway, also, turns the pathetic catastrophe of *The Orphan*, produced at Dorset Gardens in 1680, upon a deceit which produces similar though unhappy circumstances. Early in 1679 *Oedipus*, a joint production of Dryden and Lee, was brought out with great success at Dorset Gardens. In his first play, *The Tragedy of Nero, Emperour of Rome*, produced at Drury Lane May 1674, Lee, with great effect, introduces those secret crimes of Nero which are told by Suetonius, *Nero*, xxviii; Tacitus, *Annales*, xiv; and in the pages of Dio Cassius.

Crowne, whose attention to ancient tragedy had, perhaps, been directed by *Oedipus*, wrote *Thyestes*, and he certainly spares us none of the lust and the horror, the *cumulata* "*Thyesteis uiscera mensis*" being actually shown on the stage. In the same author's political comedy, *City Politiques*, produced at Drury Lane in December 1682 (or January 1682-3), Craffy, the Podesta's foolish son, seeks to intrigue with Rosaura, his father's second wife, a beautiful and wanton woman. But the episode is farcically treated. We have a very different picture in *The Double-Dealer*, produced at Drury Lane early in November 1693, when Lady Touchwood is amorous of Lord Touchwood's nephew, Mellefont, and upon his refusal of her addresses uses the suggestion of incest to inflame her husband against him. The complications in Mrs. Behn's comedy *The Dutch Lover*, produced at Dorset Gardens, February 1672-3, are happily cleared. " Rag " Smith's *Phaedra and Hippolitus*, produced in

1709, and popular throughout the eighteenth century, deals, of course, with the well-known Greek legend.

Shelley's *The Cenci*, when produced in November 1922 at the New Theatre with Miss Sybil Thorndike as Beatrice Cenci, did not prove a good acting play, being rightly considered to be more poetical than dramatic.

On the Italian stage, however, Gabriele d'Annunzio's *La Città Morta* has proved one of the most powerful and moving of modern tragedies. It is said that a license for public performance in England has been refused to the translation of Luigi Pirandello's *Sei Personnaggi in cerco d'Autore* owing to a hint of incestuous love between a father and his child.

There are two tragedies which, in their story, exactly resemble *The Mysterious Mother*, and the theme of which was probably in each case taken from Bandello or the *Heptameron*. The scene of *The Fatal Discovery*; or, *Love in Ruines*, an anonymous play, produced at Drury Lane in the spring of 1697-8, is laid at Venice. Cornaro (George Powell) is unwittingly by Berengaria (Frances Maria Knight), his mother, the father of Eromena (Letitia Cross), whom he weds. Berengaria in a frenzy stabs Eromena and then kills herself, whilst Cornaro falls in a duel with Segerdo (Evans) who loves Eromena. There is a comic underplot, and it must be allowed that this serves to accentuate the horror of the tragic scenes which are of no mean order. The play was published by Powell, quarto, 1698, and the Preface contains a sharp attack upon Dryden's verses compli-

menting Granville on *Heroick Love*. In 1737 there was printed, octavo, with a dedication to the Duchess of Beaufort, *Innocence Distress'd; or, The Royal Penitents*, a tragedy by Robert Gould, who died in 1709. This tragedy was never acted, but issued by subscription for the benefit of the poet's daughter, Hannah. The scene is laid at "Mosco, the Metropolis of Moscovy," and the relations between Theodones, the Great Duke, the Dutchess, his mother, and Aderissa, the daughter, are the same as those of Cornaro, Berengaria, and Eromena, in the earlier play. Though not without striking passages it is hardly a piece of that grim power which is necessary to support so horrid a theme.

The same cannot, I think, be said of Walpole's drama, which has extraordinary merit. The incidents are handled with great delicacy, yet without such affectation of nicety as would imperil the strength and terror of the tale. The blank verse is nervous and often beautiful; sometimes, indeed, at moments of emotional stress, it rises to remarkable heights, and must be considered very grand and fine. I know of no contemporary tragedy, nor, indeed, of any drama during many years before and after, which is in any way comparable to the vigour and spirit that moves these scenes. The shadowed melancholy that broods over the accursed castle is suggested with the touch of a master, and the march to doom seems inevitable from the first. There is something terrible in the way that mere accidents hurry on the catastrophe. Exception may, of course, be taken to the figures of



the two friars, whom Walpole has idly portrayed in such impossible colours, but once we allow that blemish, due to the superstitious ignorance and prejudice of the age, there is little else adversely to criticize, and much warmly to admire. Although from the purely literary point of view a greater work, *The Mysterious Mother*, owing to Walpole's excessive caution and the fact that it was at first but privately printed in such small numbers, is not so well known and has not been so widely praised as *The Castle of Otranto*. To this latter we owe nothing less than a revolution in public taste, and its influence is strong even at the present day. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that to Walpole's romance is due the ghost story and the novel, containing so much of the supernatural and occult, than which no forms of literature are now more common and applauded. *The Castle of Otranto* is, in fine, a notable landmark in the history of English taste and English literature.



# THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO





T H E  
CASTLE of OTRANTO,  
A  
S T O R Y.

Translated by

WILLIAM MARSHAL, Gent.

From the Original ITALIAN of

ONUPHRIO MURALTO,

CANON of the Church of St. NICHOLAS  
at O T R A N T O.

L O N D O N :

Printed for THO. LOWNDS in Fleet-Street.  
MDCCLXV.



## THE TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

THE following work was found in the library of an ancient Catholic family in the north of *England*. It was printed at *Naples*, in the black letter, in the year 1529. How much sooner it was written does not appear. The principal incidents are such as were believed in the darkest ages of christianity; but the language and conduct have nothing that savours of barbarism. The style is the purest *Italian*. If the story was written near the time when it is supposed to have happened, it must have been between 1095, the æra of the first crusade, and 1243, the date of the last, or not long afterwards. There is no other circumstance in the work, that can lead us to guess at the period in which the scene is laid. The names of the actors are evidently fictitious, and probably disguised on purpose: yet the *Spanish* names of the domestics seem to indicate that this work was not composed until the establishment of the *Arragonian* kings in *Naples* had made *Spanish* appellations familiar in that country. The beauty of the diction, and the zeal of the author [moderated, however, by singular judgment] concur to make me think, that the date of the composition was little antecedent to that of the impression. Letters were then in their most flourishing state in *Italy*, and contributed to dispel the empire of superstition, at that time so forcibly attacked by the reformers. It is not unlikely, that an artful priest

might endeavour to turn their own arms on the innovators; and might avail himself of his abilities as an author to confirm the populace in their ancient errors and superstitions. If this was his view, he has certainly acted with signal address. Such a work as the following would enslave a hundred vulgar minds, beyond half the books of controversy that have been written from the days of *Luther* to the present hour.

This solution of the author's motives is, however, offered as a mere conjecture. Whatever his views were, or whatever effects the execution of them might have, his work can only be laid before the public at present as a matter of entertainment. Even as such, some apology for it is necessary. Miracles, visions, necromancy, dreams, and other preternatural events, are exploded now even from romances. That was not the case when our author wrote; much less when the story itself is supposed to have happened. Belief in every kind of prodigy was so established in those dark ages, that an author would not be faithful to the *manners* of the times, who should omit all mention of them. He is not bound to believe them himself, but he must represent his actors as believing them.

If this *air* of the *miraculous* is excused, the reader will find nothing else unworthy of his perusal. Allow the possibility of the facts, and all the actors comport themselves as persons would do in their situation. There is no bombast, no similes, flowers, digressions, or unnecessary descriptions. Every thing tends directly to the catastrophe. Never is the reader's attention relaxed. The rules of the drama are almost



observed throughout the conduct of the piece. The characters are well drawn, and still better maintained. Terror, the author's principal engine, prevents the story from ever languishing; and it is so often contrasted by pity, that the mind is kept up in a constant vicissitude of interesting passions.

Some persons may, perhaps, think the characters of the domestics too little serious for the general cast of the story; but, besides their opposition to the principal personages, the art of the author is very observable in his conduct of the subalterns. They discover many passages essential to the story, which could not be well brought to light but by their naiveté and simplicity: in particular, the womanish terror and foibles of *Bianca*, in the last chapter, conduce essentially towards advancing the catastrophe.

It is natural for a translator to be prejudiced in favour of his adopted work. More impartial readers may not be so much struck with the beauties of this piece as I was. Yet I am not blind to my author's defects. I could wish he had grounded his plan on a more useful moral than this: that *the sins of fathers are visited on their children to the third and fourth generation*. I doubt whether, in his time, any more than at present, ambition curbed its appetite of dominion from the dread of so remote a punishment. And yet this moral is weakened by that less direct insinuation, that even such anathema may be diverted, by devotion to St. *Nicholas*. Here, the interest of the Monk plainly gets the better of the judgment of the Author. However, with all its faults, I have no

doubt but the *English* reader will be pleased with a sight of this performance. The piety that reigns throughout, the lessons of virtue that are inculcated, and the rigid purity of the sentiments, exempt this work from the censure to which romances are but too liable. Should it meet with the success I hope for, I may be encouraged to re-print the original *Italian*, though it will tend to depreciate my own labour. Our language falls far short of the charms of the *Italian*, both for variety and harmony. The latter is peculiarly excellent for simple narrative. It is difficult, in *English* to relate without falling too low, or rising too high; a fault obviously occasioned by the little care taken to speak pure language in common conversation. Every *Italian* or *Frenchman* of any rank piques himself on speaking his own tongue correctly and with choice. I cannot flatter myself with having done justice to my author in this respect: His stile is as elegant, as his conduct of the passions is masterly. It is a pity that he did not apply his talents to what they were evidently proper for, the theatre.

I will detain the reader no longer, but to make one short remark. Though the machinery is invention, and the names of the actors imaginary, I cannot but believe, that the ground-work of the story is founded on truth. The scene is undoubtedly laid in some real castle. The author seems frequently, without design, to describe particular parts. *The chamber*, says he, *on the right-hand; the door on the left-hand; the distance from the chapel to Conrad's apartment.* These, and

## THE TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE 9

other passages, are strong presumptions that the author had some certain building in his eye. Curious persons, who have leisure to employ in such researches, may possibly discover in the Italian writers the foundation on which our author has built. If a catastrophe, at all resembling that which he describes, is believed to have given rise to this work, it will contribute to interest the reader, and will make the Castle of *Otranto* a still more moving story.





## SONNET

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE

LADY MARY COKE

The gentle Maid, whose hapless Tale  
These melancholy pages speak;  
Say, gracious Lady, shall she fail  
To draw the tear adown thy cheek?

No; never was thy pitying breast  
Insensible to human woes:  
Tender tho' firm, it melts distrest  
For weaknesses it never knows.

Oh! guard the marvels I relate  
Of fell ambition scourg'd by fate,  
From reason's peevish blame.

Blest with thy smile, my dauntless sail  
I dare expand to Fancy's gale,  
For sure thy smiles are Fame.

*H.W.*



## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE favourable manner in which this little piece has been received by the public, calls upon the author to explain the grounds on which he composed it. But, before he opens those motives, it is fit that he should ask pardon of his readers for having offered his work to them under the borrowed personage of a translator. As diffidence of his own abilities, and the novelty of the attempt, were the sole inducements to assume that disguise, he flatters himself he shall appear excusable. He resigned his performance to the impartial judgment of the public; determined to let it perish in obscurity, if disapproved; nor meaning to avow such a trifle, unless better judges should pronounce that he might own it without a blush.

It was an attempt to blend the two kinds of Romance, the ancient and the modern. In the former, all was imagination and improbability: in the latter, nature is always intended to be, and sometimes has been, copied with success. Invention has not been wanting; but the great resources of fancy have been dammed up, by a strict adherence to common life. But if, in the latter species, Nature has cramped imagination, she did but take her revenge, having been totally excluded from old romances. The actions, sentiments, and conversations, of the heroes and heroines of ancient days, were as unnatural as the machines employed to put them in motion.

The author of the following pages thought it possible to reconcile the two kinds. Desirous of leaving the powers of fancy at liberty to expatiate through the boundless realms of invention, and thence of creating more interesting situations, he wished to conduct the mortal agents in his drama according to the rules of probability; in short, to make them think, speak, and act, as it might be supposed mere men and women would do in extraordinary positions. He had observed, that, in all inspired writings, the personages under the dispensation of miracles, and witnesses to the most stupendous phenomena, never lose sight of their human character: whereas, in the productions of romantic story, an improbable event never fails to be attended by an absurd dialogue. The actors seem to lose their senses, the moment the laws of Nature have lost their tone. As the public have applauded the attempt, the author must not say he was entirely unequal to the task he had undertaken: yet, if the new route he has struck out shall have paved a road for men of brighter talents, he shall own, with pleasure and modesty, that he was sensible the plan was capable of receiving greater embellishments than his imagination, or conduct of the passions could bestow on it.

WITH regard to the deportment of the domestics, on which I have touched in the former preface, I will beg leave to add a few words. The simplicity of their behaviour, almost tending to excite smiles, which, at first, seems not consonant to the serious cast of the work, appeared to me not only not improper, but was

marked designedly in that manner. My rule was Nature. However grave, important, or even melancholy, the sensations of Princes and heroes may be, they do not stamp the same affections on their domestics: at least the latter do not, or should not be made to, express their passions in the same dignified tone. In my humble opinion, the contrast between the sublime of the one and the naiveté of the other, sets the pathetic of the former in a stronger light. The very impatience which a reader feels, while delayed, by the coarse pleasantries of vulgar actors, from arriving at the knowledge of the important catastrophe he expects, perhaps heightens, certainly proves that he has been artfully interested in, the depending event. But I had higher authority than my own opinion for this conduct. That great master of nature, *Shakespeare*, was the model I copied. Let me ask, if his tragedies of *Hamlet* and *Julius Cæsar* would not lose a considerable share of their spirit and wonderful beauties, if the humour of the grave-diggers, the fooleries of *Polonius*, and the clumsy jests of the *Roman* citizens, were omitted, or vested in heroics? Is not the eloquence of *Antony*, the nobler and affectedly-unaffected oration of *Brutus*, artificially exalted by the rude bursts of nature from the mouths of their auditors? These touches remind one of the *Grecian* sculptor, who, to convey the idea of a Colossus, within the dimensions of a seal, inserted a little boy measuring his thumb.

No, says *Voltaire*, in his edition of *Corneille*, this mixture of buffoonery and solemnity is intolerable.—



*Voltaire* is a genius<sup>1</sup>—but not of *Shakespeare's* magnitude. Without recurring to disputable authority, I appeal from *Voltaire* to himself. I shall not avail myself of his former encomiums on our mighty poet; though the *French* critic has twice translated the same speech in *Hamlet*, some years ago in admiration, latterly in derision; and I am sorry to find that his judgment grows weaker when it ought to be farther matured. But I shall make use of his own words, delivered on the general topic of the theatre, when he was neither thinking to recommend or decry *Shakespeare's* practice; consequently, at a moment when *Voltaire* was impartial. In the preface to his *Enfant*

<sup>1</sup> The following remark is foreign to the present question, yet excusable in an *Englishman*, who is willing to think that the severe criticisms of so masterly a writer as *Voltaire* on our immortal countryman, may have been the effusions of wit and precipitation, rather than the result of judgment and attention. May not the critic's skill, in the force and powers of our language, have been as incorrect and incompetent as his knowledge of our history? of the latter, his own pen has dropped glaring evidence. In his Preface to *Thomas Corneille's* *Earl of Essex*, *Monsieur de Voltaire* allows that the truth of history has been grossly perverted in that piece. In excuse he pleads, that when *Corneille* wrote, the noblesse of *France* were much unread in *English* story; but now, says the commentator, that they study it, such misrepresentations would not be suffered—yet forgetting that the period of ignorance is lapsed, and that it is not very necessary to instruct the knowing, he undertakes, from the overflowing of his own reading, to give the nobility of his own country a detail of *Queen Elizabeth's* favourites—of whom, says he, *Robert Dudley* was the first, and the *Earl of Leicester* the second. Could one have believed that it could be necessary to inform *Monsieur de Voltaire* himself, that *Robert Dudley* and the *Earl of Leicester* were the same person?

*Prodigue*, that exquisite piece, of which I declare my admiration, and which, should I live twenty years longer, I trust I shall never attempt to ridicule, he has these words, speaking of comedy, [but equally applicable to tragedy, if tragedy is, as surely it ought to be, a picture of human life; nor can I conceive why occasional pleasantry ought more to be banished from the tragic scene, than pathetic seriousness from the comic,] *On y voit un mélange de sérieux et de plaisanterie, de comique et de touchant ; souvent même une seule aventure produit tous ces contrastes. Rien n'est si commun qu'une maison dans laquelle un père gronde, une fille occupée de sa passion pleure ; le fils se moque des deux, et quelques parents prennent différemment part à la scène, etc. Nous n'inférons pas de là que toute comédie doive avoir des scènes de bouffonnerie et des scènes attendrissantes : il y a beaucoup de très bonnes pièces où il ne règne que de la gaieté ; d'autres toutes sérieuses ; d'autres mélangées : d'autres où l'attendrissement va jusques aux larmes : il ne faut donner l'exclusion à aucun genre ; et si on me demandoit, quel genre est le meilleur, je répondrois, celui qui est le mieux traité.* Surely if a comedy may be *toute sérieuse*, tragedy may now and then, soberly, be indulged in a smile. Who shall proscribe it? Shall the critic, who, in self-defence, declares, that *no kind* ought to be excluded from comedy, give laws to *Shakespeare*?

I am aware that the preface from whence I have quoted these passages does not stand in *Monsieur de Voltaire's* name, but in that of his editor; yet who doubts that the editor and author were the same

person? or where is the editor, who has so happily possessed himself of his author's style, and brilliant ease of argument? These passages were indubitably the genuine sentiments of that great writer. In his epistle to *Maffei*, prefixed to his *Méropé*, he delivers almost the same opinion, though, I doubt, with a little irony. I will repeat his words, and then give my reason for quoting them. After translating a passage in *Maffei's Méropé*, Monsieur de *Voltaire* adds, *Tous ces traits sont naïfs ; tout y est convenable à ceux que vous introduisez sur la scène, et aux mœurs que vous leur donnez. Ces familiarités naturelles eussent été, à ce que je crois, bien recues dans Athènes ; mais Paris et notre parterre veulent une autre espèce de simplicité.* I doubt, I say, whether there is not a grain of sneer in this and other passages of that epistle; yet the force of truth is not damaged by being tinged with ridicule. *Maffei* was to represent a *Grecian* story: surely the *Athenians* were as competent judges of *Grecian* manners, and of the propriety of introducing them, as the *Parterre* of *Paris*. On the contrary, says *Voltaire*, (and I cannot but admire his reasoning,) there were but ten thousand citizens at *Athens*, and *Paris* has near eight hundred thousand inhabitants, among whom one may reckon thirty thousand judges of dramatic works.—Indeed!—but allowing so numerous a tribunal, I believe this is the only instance in which it was ever pretended that thirty thousand persons, living near two thousand years after the era in question, were, upon the mere face of the poll, declared better judges than the *Grecians* themselves,

of what ought to be the manners of a tragedy written on a *Grecian* story.

I will not enter into a discussion of the *espèce de simplicité*, which the *Parterre* of *Paris* demands, nor of the shackles with which *the thirty thousand judges* have cramped their poetry, the chief merit of which, as I gather from repeated passages in *The New Commentary on Corneille*, consists in vaulting in spite of those fetters; a merit which, if true, would reduce poetry from the lofty effort of imagination, to a puerile and most contemptible labour—*difficiles nugæ* with a witness! I cannot, however, help mentioning a couplet, which, to my *English* ears, always sounded as the flattest and most trifling instance of circumstantial propriety, but which *Voltaire*, who has dealt so severely with nine parts in ten of *Corneille's* works, has singled out to defend in *Racine*;

*De son appartement cette porte est prochaine,  
Et cette autre conduit dans celui de la Reine.*

*In English*

*To Cæsar's closets through this door you come,  
And t'other leads to the Queen's drawing-room.*

Unhappy *Shakespeare*! hadst thou made *Rosencrauz* inform his compeer, *Guildestern*, of the ichnography of the palace of *Copenhagen*, instead of presenting us with a moral dialogue between the Prince of *Denmark* and the grave-digger, the illuminated pit of *Paris* would have been instructed *a second time* to adore thy talents.

The result of all I have said, is, to shelter my own

daring under the canon of the brightest genius this country, at least, has produced. I might have pleaded that, having created a new species of romance, I was at liberty to lay down what rules I thought fit for the conduct of it: but I should be more proud of having imitated, however faintly, weakly, and at a distance, so masterly a pattern, than to enjoy the entire merit of invention, unless I could have marked my work with genius, as well as with originality. Such as it is, the Public have honoured it sufficiently, whatever rank their suffrages allot to it.



# THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO

A STORY, &c.

## CHAPTER I

*MANFRED*, Prince of *Otranto*, had one son and one daughter; the latter, a most beautiful virgin, aged eighteen, was called *Matilda*. *Conrad*, the son, was three years younger, a homely youth, sickly, and of no promising disposition; yet he was the darling of his father, who never showed any symptoms of affection to *Matilda*. *Manfred* had contracted a marriage for his son with the Marquis of *Vicenza's* daughter, *Isabella*; and she had already been delivered by her guardians into the hands of *Manfred*, that he might celebrate the wedding as soon as *Conrad's* infirm state of health would permit. *Manfred's* impatience for this ceremonial was remarked by his family and neighbours. The former, indeed, apprehending the severity of their Prince's disposition, did not dare to utter their surmises on this precipitation. *Hippolita*, his wife, an amiable Lady, did sometimes venture to represent the danger of marrying their only son so early, considering his great youth, and greater infirmities; but she never received any other answer than reflections on her own sterility, who had given

him but one heir. His tenants and subjects were less cautious in their discourses: they attributed this hasty wedding to the Prince's dread of seeing accomplished an ancient prophecy, which was said to have pronounced, that *the Castle and Lordship of Otranto should pass from the present family whenever the real owner should be grown too large to inhabit it*. It was difficult to make any sense of this prophecy; and still less easy to conceive what it had to do with the marriage in question. Yet these mysteries, or contradictions, did not make the populace adhere the less to their opinion.

Young *Conrad's* birth-day was fixed for his espousals. The company was assembled in the chapel of the castle, and everything ready for beginning the divine office, when *Conrad* himself was missing. *Manfred*, impatient of the least delay, and who had not observed his son retire, dispatched one of his attendants to summon the young Prince. The servant, who had not stayed long enough to have crossed the court to *Conrad's* apartment, came running back breathless, in a frantic manner, his eyes staring, and foaming at the mouth. He said nothing, but pointed to the court. The company were struck with terror and amazement. The Princess *Hippolita*, without knowing what was the matter, but anxious for her son, swooned away. *Manfred*, less apprehensive than enraged at the procrastination of the nuptials, and at the folly of his domestic, asked imperiously, what was the matter? The fellow made no answer, but continued pointing towards the court-

yard; and, at last, after repeated questions put to him, cried out, Oh! the helmet! the helmet! In the mean time, some of the company had run into the court, from whence was heard a confused noise of shrieks, horror, and surprise. *Manfred*, who began to be alarmed at not seeing his son, went himself, to get information of what occasioned this strange confusion. *Matilda* remained, endeavouring to assist her mother; and *Isabella* stayed for the same purpose, and to avoid showing any impatience for the bridegroom, for whom, in truth, she had conceived little affection.

The first thing, that struck *Manfred's* eyes, was a group of his servants, endeavouring to raise something, that appeared to him a mountain of sable plumes. He gazed, without believing his sight. What are ye doing? cried *Manfred*, wrathfully; where is my son? A volley of voices replied, Oh! my Lord! the Prince! the Prince! the helmet! the helmet! Shocked with these lamentable sounds, and dreading he knew not what, he advanced hastily; but, what a sight for a father's eyes!—he beheld his child dashed to pieces, and almost buried under an enormous helmet, a hundred times more large than any casque ever made for human being, and shaded with a proportionable quantity of black feathers.

The horror of the spectacle, the ignorance of all around how this misfortune had happened, and, above all, the tremendous phenomenon before him, took away the Prince's speech. Yet his silence lasted longer than even grief could occasion. He fixed his

eyes on what he wished in vain to believe a vision; and seemed less attentive to his loss, than buried in meditation on the stupendous object that had occasioned it. He touched, he examined, the fatal casque; nor could even the bleeding mangled remains of the young Prince, divert the eyes of *Manfred* from the portent before him. All, who had known his partial fondness for young *Conrad*, were as much surprised at their Prince's insensibility, as thunderstruck themselves at the miracle of the helmet. They conveyed the disfigured corpse into the hall, without receiving the least direction from *Manfred*. As little was he attentive to the ladies who remained in the chapel: on the contrary, without mentioning the unhappy Princesses, his wife and daughter, the first sounds that dropped from *Manfred's* lips were, take care of the Lady *Isabella*.

The domestics, without observing the singularity of this direction, were guided by their affection to their mistress, to consider it as peculiarly addressed to her situation, and flew to her assistance. They conveyed her to her chamber, more dead than alive, and indifferent to all the strange circumstances she heard, except the death of her son. *Matilda*, who doted on her mother, smothered her own grief and amazement, and thought of nothing but assisting and comforting her afflicted parent. *Isabella*, who had been treated by *Hippolita* like a daughter, and who returned that tenderness with equal duty and affection, was scarce less assiduous about the Princess; at the same time, endeavouring to partake and lessen the weight of

sorrow which she saw *Matilda* strove to suppress, for whom she had conceived the warmest sympathy of friendship. Yet her own situation could not help finding its place in her thoughts. She felt no concern for the death of young *Conrad*, except commiseration; and she was not sorry to be delivered from a marriage, which had promised her little felicity, either from her destined bridegroom, or from the severe temper of *Manfred*; who, though he had distinguished her by great indulgence, had impressed her mind with terror, from his causeless rigour to such amiable Princesses as *Hippolita* and *Matilda*.

While the Ladies were conveying the wretched mother to her bed, *Manfred* remained in the court, gazing on the ominous casque, and regardless of the crowd, which the strangeness of the event had now assembled around him. The few words he articulated, tended solely to inquiries, whether any man knew from whence it could have come? Nobody could give him the least information. However, as it seemed to be the sole object of his curiosity, it soon became so to the rest of the spectators, whose conjectures were as absurd and improbable, as the catastrophe itself was unprecedented. In the midst of their senseless guesses, a young peasant, whom rumour had drawn thither from a neighbouring village, observed, that the miraculous helmet was exactly like that on the figure in black marble of *Alfonso* the Good, one of their former Princes, in the church of *St. Nicholas*. Villain! what sayest thou? cried *Manfred*, starting from his trance in a tempest of rage, and seizing the



young man by the collar; how darest thou utter such treason? thy life shall pay for it. The spectators, who as little comprehended the cause of the Prince's fury as all the rest they had seen, were at a loss to unravel this new circumstance. The young peasant himself was still more astonished, not conceiving how he had offended the Prince: yet, recollecting himself, with a mixture of grace and humility, he disengaged himself from *Manfred's* grip, and then, with an obeisance, which discovered more jealousy of innocence, than dismay, he asked, with respect, of what he was guilty? *Manfred*, more enraged at the vigour, however decently exerted, with which the young man had shaken off his hold, than appeased by his submission, ordered his attendants to seize him; and, if he had not been withheld by his friends, whom he had invited to the nuptials, would have poignarded the peasant in their arms.

During this altercation, some of the vulgar spectators had run to the great church, which stood near the castle, and came back open-mouthed, declaring, that the helmet was missing from *Alfonso's* statue. *Manfred*, at this news, grew perfectly frantic; and, as if he sought a subject on which to vent the tempest within him, he rushed again on the young peasant, crying, Villain! monster! sorcerer! 'tis thou hast done this! 'tis thou hast slain my son! The mob, who wanted some object within the scope of their capacities, on whom they might discharge their bewildered reasonings, caught the words from the mouth of their lord, and re-echoed, Aye, aye; 'tis

he! 'tis he! He has stolen the helmet from good *Alfonso's* tomb, and dashed out the brains of our young Prince with it!—never reflecting, how enormous the disproportion was between the marble helmet that had been in the church, and that of steel before their eyes; nor, how impossible it was for a youth, seemingly not twenty, to wield a piece of armour of so prodigious a weight.

The folly of these ejaculations brought *Manfred* to himself: yet, whether provoked at the peasant having observed the resemblance between the two helmets, and thereby led to the farther discovery of the absence of that in the church; or wishing to bury any fresh rumour under so impertinent a supposition; he gravely pronounced that the young man was certainly a necromancer, and that, till the church could take cognizance of the affair, he would have the magician, whom they had thus detected, kept prisoner under the helmet itself, which he ordered his attendants to raise, and place the young man under it; declaring, he should be kept there without food, with which his own infernal art might furnish him.

It was in vain for the youth to represent against this preposterous sentence: in vain did *Manfred's* friends endeavour to divert him from this savage and ill-grounded resolution. The generality were charmed with their Lord's decision, which, to their apprehensions, carried great appearance of justice; as the magician was to be punished by the very instrument with which he had offended: nor were they struck with the least compunction at the probability of the

youth being starved; for they firmly believed, that, by his diabolical skill, he could easily supply himself with nutriment.

*Manfred* thus saw his commands even cheerfully obeyed; and, appointing a guard, with strict orders to prevent any food being conveyed to the prisoner, he dismissed his friends and attendants, and retired to his own chamber, after locking the gates of the castle, in which he suffered none but his domestics to remain.

In the mean time, the care and zeal of the young ladies had brought the Princess *Hippolita* to herself, who, amidst the transports of her own sorrow, frequently demanded news of her Lord; would have dismissed her attendants to watch over him, and at last enjoined *Matilda* to leave her, and visit and comfort her father. *Matilda*, who wanted no affectionate duty to *Manfred*, though she trembled at his austerity, obeyed the orders of *Hippolita*, whom she tenderly recommended to *Isabella*; and, enquiring of the domestics for her father, was informed, that he was retired to his chamber, and had commanded that nobody should have admittance to him. Concluding that he was immersed in sorrow for the death of her brother, and fearing to renew his tears by the sight of his sole remaining child, she hesitated whether she should break in upon his affliction; yet, solicitude for him, backed by the commands of her mother, encouraged her to venture disobeying the orders he had given; a fault she had never been guilty of before. The gentle timidity of her nature made her pause for

some minutes at his door. She heard him traverse his chamber, backwards and forwards, with disordered steps; a mood which increased her apprehensions. She was, however, just going to beg admittance, when *Manfred* suddenly opened the door; and, as it was now twilight, concurring with the disorder of his mind, he did not distinguish the person, but asked angrily, who it was? *Matilda* replied, trembling, My dearest father, it is I, your daughter. *Manfred*, stepping back hastily, cried, Begone! I do not want a daughter; and, flinging back abruptly, clapped the door against the terrified *Matilda*.

She was too well acquainted with her father's impetuosity, to venture a second intrusion. When she had a little recovered the shock of so bitter a reception, she wiped away her tears, to prevent the additional stab that the knowledge of it would give to *Hippolita*, who questioned her, in the most anxious terms, on the health of *Manfred*, and how he bore his loss. *Matilda* assured her he was well, and supported his misfortune with manly fortitude. But, will he not let me see him? said *Hippolita*, mournfully; will he not permit me to blend my tears with his, and shed a mother's sorrows in the bosom of her Lord? or do you deceive me, *Matilda*? I know how *Manfred* doted on his son: is not the stroke too heavy for him? has he not sunk under it? You do not answer me; alas! I dread the worst! Raise me, my maidens; I will, I will, see my Lord. Bear me to him instantly: he is dearer to me even than my children! *Matilda* made signs to *Isabella* to prevent

*Hippolita's* rising; and both those lovely young women were using their gentle violence to stop and calm the Princess, when a servant, on the part of *Manfred*, arrived, and told *Isabella*, that his Lord demanded to speak with her.

With me! cried *Isabella*. Go, said *Hippolita*, relieved by a message from her Lord. *Manfred* cannot support the sight of his own family. He thinks you less disordered than we are, and dreads the shock of my grief. Console him, dear *Isabella*; and tell him, I will smother my own anguish rather than add to his.

As it was now evening, the servant, who conducted *Isabella*, bore a torch before her. When they came to *Manfred*, who was walking impatiently about the gallery, he started, and said hastily, Take away that light, and begone! Then, shutting the door impetuously, he flung himself upon a bench against the wall, and bade *Isabella* sit by him. She obeyed, trembling. I sent for you, Lady—said he, and then stopped, under great appearance of confusion. My Lord—Yes, I sent for you on a matter of great moment, resumed he—dry your tears, young Lady. You have lost your bridegroom—yes, cruel fate! and I have lost the hopes of my race! but *Conrad* was not worthy of your beauty. How! my Lord! said *Isabella*; sure you do not suspect me of not feeling the concern I ought! my duty and affection would have always—Think no more of him, interrupted *Manfred*; he was a sickly, puny child; and heaven has perhaps taken him away, that I might not trust



the honours of my house on so frail a foundation. The line of *Manfred* calls for numerous supports. My foolish fondness for that boy blinded the eyes of my prudence; but it is better as it is. I hope, in a few years, to have reason to rejoice at the death of *Conrad*.

Words cannot paint the astonishment of *Isabella*. At first, she apprehended that grief had disordered *Manfred's* understanding. Her next thought suggested, that this strange discourse was designed to ensnare her: she feared that *Manfred* had perceived her indifference for his son; and, in consequence of that idea, she replied, Good my Lord, do not doubt my tenderness! my heart would have accompanied my hand. *Conrad* would have engrossed all my care; and wherever fate shall dispose of me, I shall always cherish his memory, and regard your highness, and the virtuous *Hippolita*, as my parents. Curse on *Hippolita*! cried *Manfred*. Forget her from this moment, as I do. In short, Lady, you have missed a husband undeserving of your charms: they shall now be better disposed of. Instead of a sickly boy, you shall have a husband in the prime of his age, who will know how to value your beauties, and who may expect a numerous offspring. Alas! my Lord, said *Isabella*, my mind is too sadly engrossed, by the recent catastrophe in your family, to think of another marriage. If ever my father returns, and it shall be his pleasure, I shall obey, as I did when I consented to give my hand to your son: but until his return, permit me to remain under your hospitable roof, and employ the

melancholy hours in assuaging yours, *Hippolita's*, and the fair *Matilda's* affliction.

I desired you once before, said *Manfred* angrily, not to name that woman: from this hour she must be a stranger to you, as she must be to me; in short, *Isabella*, since I cannot give you my son, I offer you myself. Heavens! cried *Isabella*, waking from her delusion, what do I hear! you, my Lord! you! my father-in-law! the father of *Conrad*! the husband of the virtuous and tender *Hippolita*!—I tell you, said *Manfred*, imperiously, *Hippolita* is no longer my wife; I divorce her from this hour. Too long has she cursed me by her unfruitfulness. My fate depends on having sons; and this night, I trust, will give a new date to my hopes. At these words he seized the cold hand of *Isabella*, who was half dead with fright and horror. She shrieked, and started from him. *Manfred* rose to pursue her; when the moon, which was now up, and gleamed in at the opposite casement, presented to his sight the plumes of the fatal helmet, which rose to the height of the windows, waving backwards and forwards in a tempestuous manner, and accompanied with a hollow and rustling sound. *Isabella*, who gathered courage from her situation, and who dreaded nothing so much as *Manfred's* pursuit of his declaration, cried, Look! my Lord! see! Heaven itself declares against your impious intentions—Heaven nor hell shall impede my designs! said *Manfred*, advancing again to seize the Princess. At that instant, the portrait of his grandfather, which hung over the bench where they had been sitting,





*Isabella and Manfred.*

uttered a deep sigh, and heaved its breast. *Isabella*, whose back was turned to the picture, saw not the motion, nor whence the sound came; but started, and said, Hark, my Lord! What sound was that? and, at the same time, made towards the door. *Manfred*, distracted between the flight of *Isabella*, who had now reached the stairs, and yet unable to keep his eyes from the picture, which began to move, had, however, advanced some steps after her, still looking backwards on the portrait, when he saw it quit its panel, and descend on the floor, with a grave and melancholy air. Do I dream? cried *Manfred*, returning; or are the devils themselves in league against me? Speak, infernal spectre! or, if thou art my grandsire, why dost thou too conspire against thy wretched descendant, who too dearly pays for—e'er he could finish the sentence, the vision sighed again, and made a sign to *Manfred* to follow him. Lead on! cried *Manfred*; I will follow thee to the gulph of perdition! The spectre marched sedately, but dejected, to the end of the gallery, and turned into a chamber on the right-hand. *Manfred* accompanied him at a little distance, full of anxiety and horror, but resolved. As he would have entered the chamber, the door was clapped to with violence by an invisible hand. The Prince, collecting courage from this delay, would have forcibly burst open the door with his foot, but found that it resisted his utmost efforts. Since hell will not satisfy my curiosity, said *Manfred*, I will use the human means in my power for preserving my race; *Isabella* shall not escape me.



That Lady, whose resolution had given way to terror the moment she had quitted *Manfred*, continued her flight to the bottom of the principal staircase. There she stopped, not knowing whither to direct her steps, nor how to escape from the impetuosity of the Prince. The gates of the castle, she knew, were locked, and guards placed in the court. Should she, as her heart prompted her, go and prepare *Hippolita* for the cruel destiny that awaited her; she did not doubt but *Manfred* would seek her there, and that his violence would incite him to double the injury he meditated, without leaving room for them to avoid the impetuosity of his passions. Delay might give him time to reflect on the horrid measures he had conceived, or produce some circumstance in her favour, if she could, for that night at least, avoid his odious purpose. Yet where conceal herself! how avoid the pursuit he would infallibly make throughout the castle! As these thoughts passed rapidly through her mind, she recollected a subterraneous passage, which led from the vaults of the castle to the church of *St. Nicholas*. Could she reach the altar before she was overtaken, she knew even *Manfred's* violence would not dare to profane the sacredness of the place; and she determined, if no other means of deliverance offered, to shut herself up for ever among the holy virgins, whose convent was contiguous to the cathedral. In this resolution, she seized a lamp, that burned at the foot of the staircase, and hurried towards the secret passage.

The lower part of the castle was hollowed into

several intricate cloysters; and it was not easy for one, under so much anxiety, to find the door that opened into the cavern. An awful silence reigned throughout those subterraneous regions, except, now and then, some blasts of wind that shook the doors she had passed, and which, grating on the rusty hinges, were re-echoed through that long labyrinth of darkness. Every murmur struck her with new terror; yet more she dreaded to hear the wrathful voice of *Manfred*, urging his domestics to pursue her. She trod as softly as impatience would give her leave,—yet frequently stopped, and listened to hear if she was followed. In one of those moments she thought she heard a sigh. She shuddered, and recoiled a few paces. In a moment she thought she heard the step of some person. Her blood curdled; she concluded it was *Manfred*. Every suggestion, that horror could inspire, rushed into her mind. She condemned her rash flight, which had thus exposed her to his rage, in a place where her cries were not likely to draw anybody to her assistance. Yet the sound seemed not to come from behind; if *Manfred* knew where she was, he must have followed her: she was still in one of the cloysters, and the steps she had heard were too distinct to proceed from the way she had come. Cheered with this reflection, and hoping to find a friend in whoever was not the Prince, she was going to advance, when a door, that stood ajar, at some distance to the left, was opened gently; but, e'er her lamp, which she held up, could discover who opened it, the person retreated precipitately, on seeing the light.

*Isabella*, whom every incident was sufficient to dismay, hesitated whether she should proceed. Her dread of *Manfred* soon outweighed every other terror. The very circumstance of the person avoiding her, gave her a sort of courage. It could only be, she thought, some domestic belonging to the castle. Her gentleness had never raised her an enemy, and conscious innocence made her hope, that, unless sent by the Prince's order to seek her, his servants would rather assist than prevent her flight. Fortifying herself with these reflections, and believing, by what she could observe, that she was near the mouth of the subterranean cavern, she approached the door that had been opened; but a sudden gust of wind, that met her at the door, extinguished her lamp, and left her in total darkness.

Words cannot paint the horror of the Princess's situation. Alone, in so dismal a place, her mind impressed with all the terrible events of the day, hopeless of escaping, expecting every moment the arrival of *Manfred*, and far from tranquil on knowing she was within reach of somebody, she knew not whom, who for some cause seemed concealed thereabouts; all these thoughts crowded on her distracted mind, and she was ready to sink under her apprehensions. She addressed herself to every Saint in heaven, and inwardly implored their assistance. For a considerable time she remained in an agony of despair. At last, as softly as was possible, she felt for the door; and, having found it, entered trembling into the vault, from whence she had heard the sigh and steps. It





*Theodore and Isabella.*



gave her a kind of momentary joy to perceive an imperfect ray of clouded moonshine gleam from the roof of the vault, which seemed to be fallen in, and from whence hung a fragment of earth or building, she could not distinguish which, that appeared to have been crushed inwards. She advanced eagerly towards this chasm, when she discerned a human form, standing close against the wall.

She shrieked, believing it the ghost of her betrothed *Conrad*. The figure, advancing, said in a submissive voice, Be not alarmed, Lady: I will not injure you. *Isabella*, a little encouraged by the words, and tone of voice, of the stranger, and recollecting that this must be the person who had opened the door, recovered her spirits enough to reply, Sir, whoever you are, take pity on a wretched Princess, standing on the brink of destruction: Assist me to escape from this fatal castle, or in a few moments I may be made miserable for ever! Alas! said the stranger, what can I do to assist you? I will die in your defence; but I am unacquainted with the castle, and want—— Oh! said *Isabella*, hastily interrupting him, help me but to find a trap-door, that must be hereabout, and it is the greatest service you can do me, for I have not a minute to lose. Saying these words, she felt about on the pavement, and directed the stranger to search likewise, for a smooth piece of brass, inclosed in one of the stones. That, said she, is the lock, which opens with a spring, of which I know the secret. If we can find that, I may escape; if not, alas! courteous stranger, I fear I shall have involved you in my mis-

fortunes: *Manfred* will suspect you for the accomplice of my flight, and you will fall a victim to his resentment. I value not my life, said the stranger, and it will be some comfort to lose it in trying to deliver you from his tyranny. Generous youth! said *Isabella*, how shall I ever requite—as she uttered these words, a ray of moonshine, streaming through a cranny of the ruin above, shone directly on the lock they sought. Oh! transport! said *Isabella*, here is the trap-door! and, taking out a key, she touched the spring, which, starting aside, discovered an iron ring. Lift up the door, said the Princess. The stranger obeyed; and beneath appeared some stone steps, descending into a vault totally dark. We must go down here, said *Isabella*: follow me; dark and dismal as it is, we cannot miss our way; it leads directly to the church of *St. Nicholas*. But perhaps, added the Princess, modestly, you have no reason to leave the castle, nor have I further occasion for your service; in a few minutes I shall be safe from *Manfred's* rage—only let me know, to whom I am so much obliged. I will never quit you, said the stranger, eagerly, until I have placed you in safety—nor think me, Princess, more generous than I am; though you are my principal care—the stranger was interrupted by a sudden noise of voices, that seemed approaching, and they soon distinguished these words: Talk not to me of necromancers! I tell you she must be in the castle; I will find her in spite of enchantment. Oh! heavens! cried *Isabella*, it is the voice of *Manfred*! make haste, or we are ruined! and shut the trap-door after you. Saying

this, she descended the steps precipitately, and, as the stranger hastened to follow her, he let the door slip out of his hands; it fell, and the spring closed over it. He tried in vain to open it, not having observed *Isabella's* method of touching the spring; nor had he many moments to make an essay.—The noise of the falling door had been heard by *Manfred*, who, directed by the sound, hastened thither, attended by his servants with torches. It must be *Isabella*, cried *Manfred*, before he entered the vault; she is escaping by the subterraneous passage, but she cannot have got far. What was the astonishment of the Prince, when, instead of *Isabella*, the light of the torches discovered to him the young peasant, whom he thought confined under the fatal helmet! Traitor! said *Manfred*, how camest thou here? I thought thee in durance above in the court. I am no traitor, replied the young man, boldly, nor am I answerable for your thoughts.—Presumptuous villain! cried *Manfred*, dost thou provoke my wrath? tell me; how hast thou escaped from above? thou hast corrupted thy guards, and their lives shall answer it.—My poverty, said the peasant calmly, will disculpate them: though the ministers of a tyrant's wrath, to thee they are faithful, and but too willing to execute the orders which you unjustly imposed upon them. Art thou so hardy as to dare my vengeance? said the Prince; but tortures shall force the truth from thee. Tell me! I will know thy accomplices. There was my accomplice! said the youth, smiling, and pointing to the roof. *Manfred* ordered the torches to be held up, and perceived that

one of the cheeks of the enchanted casque had forced its way through the pavement of the court, as his servants had let it fall over the peasant, and had broken through into the vault, leaving a gap, through which the peasant had pressed himself some minutes before he was found by *Isabella*. Was that the way by which thou didst descend? said *Manfred*. It was, said the youth.—But what noise was that, said *Manfred*, which I heard as I entered the cloyster?—A door clapped, said the peasant; I heard it as well as you. What door? said *Manfred*, hastily. I am not acquainted with your castle, said the peasant; this is the first time I ever entered it; and this vault the only part of it within which I ever was. But I tell thee, said *Manfred* [wishing to find out if the youth had discovered the trap-door], it was this way I heard the noise: My servants heard it too. My Lord, interrupted one of them, officiously, to be sure it was the trap-door, and he was going to make his escape. Peace! blockhead! said the Prince, angrily; if he was going to escape, how should he come on this side? I will know from his own mouth what noise it was I heard. Tell me truly! thy life depends on thy veracity. My veracity is dearer to me than my life, said the peasant, nor would I purchase the one by forfeiting the other. Indeed! young philosopher! said *Manfred*, contemptuously; tell me, then, what was the noise I heard? Ask me what I can answer, said he, and put me to death instantly if I tell you a lie. *Manfred*, growing impatient at the steady valour and indifference of the youth, cried, Well then, thou

man of truth! answer; was it the fall of the trap-door that I heard? It was, said the youth. It was! said the Prince, and how didst thou come to know there was a trap-door here? I saw the plate of brass by a gleam of moonshine, replied he. But what told thee it was a lock? said *Manfred*; how didst thou discover the secret of opening it? Providence, that delivered me from the helmet, was able to direct me to the spring of a lock, said he. Providence should have gone a little farther, and have placed thee out of the reach of my resentment, said *Manfred*; When Providence had taught thee to open the lock, it abandoned thee for a fool, who did not know how to make use of its favours. Why didst thou not pursue the path pointed out for thy escape? why didst thou shut the trap-door, before thou hadst descended the steps? I might ask you, my Lord, said the peasant, how I, totally unacquainted with your castle, was to know that those steps led to any outlet? but I scorn to evade your questions. Wherever those steps led to, perhaps I should have explored the way—I could not be in a worse situation than I was. But the truth is, I let the trap-door fall: your immediate arrival followed. I had given the alarm—what imported it to me whether I was seized a minute sooner or a minute later? Thou art a resolute villain, for thy years, said *Manfred*; yet, on reflection, I suspect thou dost but trifle with me: Thou hast not yet told me how thou didst open the lock? That I will show you, my Lord, said the peasant; and, taking up a fragment of stone that had fallen from above, he laid himself



on the trap-door, and began to beat on the piece of brass that covered it; meaning to gain time for the escape of the Princess. This presence of mind, joined to the frankness of the youth, staggered *Manfred*. He even felt a disposition towards pardoning one, who had been guilty of no crime. *Manfred* was not one of those savage tyrants, who wanton in cruelty unprovoked. The circumstances of his fortune had given an asperity to his temper, which was naturally humane; and his virtues were always ready to operate, when his passions did not obscure his reason.

While the Prince was in this suspense, a confused noise of voices echoed through the distant vaults. As the sound approached, he distinguished the clamours of some of his domestics, whom he had dispersed through the castle in search of *Isabella*, calling out, Where is my Lord? where is the Prince? Here I am, said *Manfred*, as they came nearer; have you found the Princess? the first that arrived replied, Oh! my Lord! I am glad we have found you! Found me! said *Manfred*, have you found the Princess? We thought we had, my Lord, said the fellow, looking terrified, but—But what? cried the Prince; has she escaped? *Faquez*, and I, my Lord—Yes, I and *Diego*, interrupted the second, who came up in still greater consternation—Speak one of you at a time! said *Manfred*; I ask you where is the Princess? We do not know, said they, both together, but we are frightened out of our wits!—So I think, blockheads, said *Manfred*; what is it has scared you thus? Oh! my

Lord, said *Jaquez*, *Diego* has seen such a sight! your Highness would not believe your eyes.—What new absurdity is this? cried *Manfred*; give me a direct answer, or by heaven—Why, my Lord, if it please your Highness to hear me, said the poor fellow, *Diego* and I—Yes, I and *Jaquez*, cried his comrade—Did not I forbid you to speak both at a time? said the Prince; You, *Jaquez*, answer; for the other fool seems more distracted than thou art. What is the matter? My gracious Lord, said *Jaquez*, if it please your Highness to hear me. *Diego* and I, according to your Highness's orders, went to search for the young Lady; but, being apprehensive that we might meet the ghost of my young Lord, your Highness's son, God rest his soul, as he has not received christian burial—sot! cried *Manfred*, in a rage, is it only a ghost, then, that thou hast seen? Oh! worse! worse! my Lord, cried *Diego*; I had rather have seen ten whole ghosts. Grant me patience! said *Manfred*, these blockheads distract me—out of my sight, *Diego*! and thou, *Jaquez*, tell me, in one word, art thou sober? art thou raving? thou wast wont to have some sense; has the other sot frightened himself and thee too? speak, what is it he fancies he has seen? Why, my Lord, replied *Jaquez*, trembling, I was going to tell your Highness, that since the calamitous misfortune of my young Lord, God rest his precious soul! not one of us, your Highness's faithful servants—indeed we are, my Lord, though poor men—I say, not one of us has dared to set foot about the castle, but two together: So, *Diego* and I, thinking that my

young Lady might be in the great gallery, went up there to look for her, and tell her your Highness wanted something to impart to her. O blundering fools! cried *Manfred*, and, in the mean time, she has made her escape, because you were afraid of goblins! Why, thou knave! she left me in the gallery; I came from thence myself. For all that, she may be there still, for aught I know, said *Jaquez*, but the devil shall have me before I seek her there again!—poor *Diego*! I do not believe he will ever recover it! Recover what? said *Manfred*; am I never to learn what it is has terrified these rascals? but I lose my time: follow me, slave; I will see if she is in the gallery. For heaven's sake, my dear good Lord, cried *Jaquez*, do not go to the gallery! Satan himself, I believe, is in the chamber next to the gallery. *Manfred*, who hitherto had treated the terror of his servants as an idle panic, was struck at this new circumstance. He recollected the apparition of the portrait, and the sudden closing of the door at the end of the gallery—his voice faltered, and he asked with disorder, What is in the great chamber? My Lord, said *Jaquez*, when *Diego* and I came into the gallery—he went first, for he said he had more courage than I—So, when we came into the gallery, we found nobody. We looked under every bench and stool; and still we found nobody. Were all the pictures in their places? said *Manfred*. Yes, my Lord, answered *Jaquez*, but we did not think of looking behind them. Well, well, said *Manfred*, proceed. When we came to the door of the great chamber, continued *Jaquez*, we found it

shut. And could not you open it? said *Manfred*. Oh yes, my Lord; would to heaven we had not, replied he. Nay, it was not I neither, it was *Diego*: he was grown fool-hardy, and would go on, though I advised him not—if ever I open a door that is shut again! Trifle not, said *Manfred*, shuddering, but tell me what you saw in the great chamber, on opening the door. I, my Lord! said *Jaquez*, I saw nothing; I was behind *Diego*; but I heard the noise. *Jaquez*, said *Manfred*, in a solemn tone of voice, tell me, I adjure thee by the souls of my ancestors, what was it thou sawest? what was it thou heardest? It was *Diego* saw it, my Lord, it was not I, replied *Jaquez*; I only heard the noise. *Diego* had no sooner opened the door, than he cried out, and ran back—I ran back too, and said, Is it the ghost? The ghost! no, no, said *Diego*, and his hair stood an end—It is a giant, I believe; he is all clad in armour, for I saw his foot and part of his leg, and they are as large as the helmet, below in the court. As he said these words, my Lord, we heard a violent motion, and the rattling of armour, as if the giant was rising; for *Diego* has told me since, that he believes the giant was lying down, for the foot and leg were stretched at length on the floor. Before we could get to the end of the gallery, we heard the door of the great chamber clap behind us, but we did not dare turn back to see if the giant was following us—yet, now I think on it, we must have heard him if he had pursued us. But, for heaven's sake, good my Lord, send for the chaplain, and have the castle exorcised! for, for certain, it is

enchanted. Ay, pray do, my Lord, cried all the servants at once, or we must leave your Highness's service. Peace, dotards! said *Manfred*, and follow me; I will know what all this means.—We, my Lord! cried they, with one voice, we would not go up to the gallery for your Highness's revenue. The young peasant, who had stood silent, now spoke. Will your Highness, said he, permit me to try this adventure? my life is of consequence to nobody: I fear no bad angel, and have offended no good one. Your behaviour is above your seeming; said *Manfred*, viewing him with surprise and admiration—hereafter I will reward your bravery—but now, continued he, with a sigh, I am so circumstanced, that I dare trust no eyes but my own—however, I give you leave to accompany me.

*Manfred*, when he first followed *Isabella* from the gallery, had gone directly to the apartment of his wife, concluding the Princess had retired thither. *Hippolita*, who knew his step, rose with anxious fondness to meet her Lord, whom she had not seen since the death of their son. She would have flown in a transport, mixed of joy and grief, to his bosom; but he pushed her rudely off, and said, Where is *Isabella*?—*Isabella*, my Lord! said the astonished *Hippolita*. Yes! *Isabella*; cried *Manfred*, imperiously; I wanted *Isabella*.—My Lord, replied *Matilda*, who perceived how much his behaviour had shocked her mother, she has not been with us since your Highness summoned her to your apartment. Tell me where she is, said the Prince; I do not want to know where she has



been. My good Lord, said *Hippolita*, your daughter tells you the truth: *Isabella* left us by your command, and has not returned since; but, my good Lord, compose yourself; retire to your rest: this dismal day has disordered you. *Isabella* shall wait your orders in the morning. What then, you know where she is! cried *Manfred*: Tell me directly, for I will not lose an instant—and you, woman, speaking to his wife, order your chaplain to attend me forthwith. *Isabella*, said *Hippolita*, calmly, is retired, I suppose, to her chamber: she is not accustomed to watch at this late hour. Gracious my Lord, continued she, let me know what has disturbed you. Has *Isabella* offended you? Trouble me not with questions, said *Manfred*, but tell me where she is. *Matilda* shall call her, said the Princess—Sit down, my Lord, and resume your wonted fortitude. What! art thou jealous of *Isabella*, replied he, that you wish to be present at our interview? Good heavens! my Lord, said *Hippolita*, what is it your Highness means?—Thou wilt know ere many minutes are past, said the cruel Prince. Send your chaplain to me, and wait my pleasure here. At these words he flung out of the room in search of *Isabella*; leaving the amazed Ladies thunderstruck with his words and frantic deportment, and lost in vain conjectures on what he was meditating.

*Manfred* was now returning from the vault, attended by the peasant, and a few of his servants, whom he had obliged to accompany him. He ascended the stair-case without stopping, till he arrived at the gallery, at the door of which he met

*Hippolita* and her chaplain. When *Diego* had been dismissed by *Manfred*, he had gone directly to the Princess's apartment with the alarm of what he had seen. That excellent Lady, who no more than *Manfred* doubted of the reality of the vision, yet affected to treat it as a delirium of the servant. Willing, however, to save her Lord from any additional shock, and prepared by a series of grief not to tremble at any accession to it, she determined to make herself the first sacrifice, if fate had marked the present hour for their destruction. Dismissing the reluctant *Matilda* to her rest, who in vain sued for leave to accompany her mother, and attended only by her chaplain, *Hippolita* had visited the gallery and great chamber; and now, with more serenity of soul than she had felt for many hours, she met her Lord, and assured him that the vision of the gigantic leg and foot was all a fable; and, no doubt, an impression made by fear, and the dark and dismal hour of the night, on the minds of his servants. She and the chaplain had examined the chamber, and found everything in the usual order.

*Manfred*, though persuaded, like his wife, that the vision had been no work of fancy, recovered a little from the tempest of mind into which so many strange events had thrown him. Ashamed, too, of his inhuman treatment of a Princess, who returned every injury with new marks of tenderness and duty; he felt returning love forcing itself into his eyes—but not less ashamed of feeling remorse towards one, against whom he was inwardly meditating a yet more bitter

outrage, he curbed the yearnings of his heart, and did not dare to lean even towards pity. The next transition of his soul was to exquisite villainy. Presuming on the unshaken submission of *Hippolita*, he flattered himself that she would not only acquiesce with patience to a divorce, but would obey, if it was his pleasure, in endeavouring to persuade *Isabella* to give him her hand; but, ere he could indulge this horrid hope, he reflected that *Isabella* was not to be found. Coming to himself, he gave orders that every avenue to the castle should be strictly guarded, and charged his domestics, on pain of their lives, to suffer nobody to pass out. The young peasant, to whom he spoke favourably, he ordered to remain in a small chamber on the stairs, in which there was a pallet-bed, and the key of which he took away himself, telling the youth he would talk with him in the morning. Then, dismissing his attendants, and bestowing a sullen kind of half-nod on *Hippolita*, he retired to his own chamber.

## CHAPTER II

*MATILDA*, who, by *Hippolita's* order, had retired to her apartment, was ill-disposed to take any rest. The shocking fate of her brother had deeply affected her. She was surprised at not seeing *Isabella*; but the strange words which had fallen from her father, and his obscure menace to the Princess, his wife, accompanied by the most furious behaviour, had filled her gentle mind with terror and alarm. She waited anxiously for the return of *Bianca*, a young damsel that attended her, whom she had sent to learn what was become of *Isabella*. *Bianca* soon appeared, and informed her mistress of what she had gathered from the servants, that *Isabella* was nowhere to be found. She related the adventure of the young peasant, who had been discovered in the vault, though with many simple additions from the incoherent account of the domestics; and she dwelled principally on the gigantic leg and foot, which had been seen in the gallery chamber. This last circumstance had terrified *Bianca* so much, that she was rejoiced when *Matilda* told her that she should not go to rest, but would watch till the Princess should rise.

The young Princess wearied herself in conjectures on the flight of *Isabella*, and on the threats of *Manfred* to her mother. But what business could he have so urgent with the chaplain, said *Matilda*; does he intend to have my brother's body interred privately in

the chapel? Oh! madam, said *Bianca*, now I guess. As you are become his heiress, he is impatient to have you married; he has always been raving for more sons; I warrant he is now impatient for grandsons. As sure as I live, madam, I shall see you a bride at last—Good Madam, you won't cast off your faithful *Bianca*! you won't put Donna *Rosara* over me, now you are a great Princess! My poor *Bianca*, said *Matilda*, how fast your thoughts amble! I a great Princess! What hast thou seen in *Manfred's* behaviour, since my brother's death, that bespeaks any increase of tenderness to me—but he is my father, and I must not complain. Nay, if heaven shuts my father's heart against me, it overpays my little merit in the tenderness of my mother. O that dear mother! yes, *Bianca*, 'tis there I feel the rugged temper of *Manfred*. I can support his harshness to me with patience; but it wounds my soul when I am witness to his causeless severity towards her. Oh! Madam, said *Bianca*, all men use their wives so, when they are weary of them. And yet you congratulated me but now, said *Matilda*, when you fancied my father intended to dispose of me! I would have you a great Lady, replied *Bianca*, come what will. I do not wish to see you moped in a convent, as you would be if you had your will, and if my Lady, your mother, who knows that a bad husband is better than no husband at all, did not hinder you—Bless me! what noise is that! *St. Nicholas* forgive me! I was but in jest. It is the wind, said *Matilda*, whistling through the battlements in the tower above: you have heard it a



thousand times. Nay, said *Bianca*, there was no harm in what I said: it is no sin to talk of matrimony—and so, Madam, as I was saying, if my Lord *Manfred* should offer you a handsome young Prince for a bridegroom, you would drop him a curtsey, and tell him you would rather take the veil? Thank heaven! I am in no such danger, said *Matilda*: you know how many proposals for me he has rejected. And you thank him, like a dutiful daughter, do you, Madam? but come, Madam; suppose, to-morrow morning, he was to send for you to the great council chamber, and there you should find at his elbow a lovely young Prince, with large black eyes, a smooth white forehead, and manly curling locks like jet; in short, Madam, a young hero resembling the picture of the good *Alfonso* in the gallery, which you sit and gaze at for hours together. Do not speak lightly of that picture, interrupted *Matilda*, sighing: I know the adoration, with which I look at that picture, is uncommon—but I am not in love with a coloured panel. The character of that virtuous Prince, the veneration with which my mother has inspired me for his memory, the orisons which, I know not why, she has enjoined me to pour forth at his tomb, all have concurred to persuade me, that, somehow or other, my destiny is linked with something relating to him. Lord! Madam, how should that be? said *Bianca*; I have always heard that your family was no way related to his; and I am sure I cannot conceive why my Lady, the Princess, sends you in a cold morning, or a damp evening, to pray at his tomb: he is no saint by the

almanack. If you must pray, why does she not bid you address yourself to our great *St. Nicholas*? I am sure he is the saint I pray to for a husband.—Perhaps my mind would be less affected, said *Matilda*, if my mother would explain her reasons to me: but it is the mystery she observes, that inspires me with this—I know not what to call it. As she never acts from caprice, I am sure there is some fatal secret at bottom—nay, I know there is: in her agony of grief for my brother's death she dropped some words that intimated as much. Oh! dear Madam, cried *Bianca*, what were they? No, said *Matilda*; if a parent lets fall a word, and wishes it recalled, it is not for a child to utter it. What! was she sorry for what she had said? asked *Bianca*; I am sure, Madam, you may trust me. With my own little secrets, when I have any, I may, said *Matilda*; but never with my mother's: a child ought to have no ears or eyes, but as a parent directs. Well, to be sure, Madam, you was born to be a saint, said *Bianca*, and there is no resisting one's vocation: you will end in a convent at last. But there is my Lady *Isabella* would not be so reserved to me; she will let me talk to her of young men; and when a handsome cavalier has come to the castle, she has owned to me that she wished your brother *Conrad* resembled him. *Bianca*, said the Princess, I do not allow you to mention my friend disrespectfully. *Isabella* is of a chearful disposition, but her soul is as pure as virtue itself. She knows your idle babbling humour, and perhaps has now and then encouraged it, to divert melancholy, and enliven the solitude in

which my father keeps us.—Blessed *Mary*! said *Bianca*, starting, there it is again! dear Madam, do you hear nothing? this castle is certainly haunted!—Peace! said *Matilda*, and listen! I did think I heard a voice—but it must be fancy; your terrors, I suppose, have infected me. Indeed! indeed! Madam, said *Bianca*, half weeping with agony, I am sure I heard a voice! Does anybody lie in the chamber beneath? said the Princess. Nobody has dared to lie there, answered *Bianca*, since the great astrologer, that was your brother's tutor, drowned himself. For certain, Madam, his ghost and the young Prince's are now met in the chamber below—for heaven's sake let us fly to your mother's apartment! I charge you not to stir, said *Matilda*; if they are spirits in pain, we may ease their sufferings by questioning them. They can mean no hurt to us, for we have not injured them; and if they should, shall we be more safe in one chamber than another? reach me my beads; we will say a prayer, and then speak to them. Oh! dear Lady, I would not speak to a ghost for the world! cried *Bianca*. As she said these words, they heard the casement of the little chamber, below *Matilda's*, open. They listened attentively, and in a few minutes thought they heard a person sing, but could not distinguish the words. This can be no evil spirit, said the Princess, in a low voice: it is undoubtedly one of the family—open the window, and we shall know the voice. I dare not indeed, Madam, said *Bianca*. Thou art a very fool, said *Matilda*, opening the window gently herself. The noise the Princess made

was, however, heard by the person beneath, who stopped; and they concluded had heard the casement open. Is anybody below? said the Princess: if there is, speak. Yes, said an unknown voice. Who is it? said *Matilda*. A stranger, replied the voice. What stranger? said she; and how didst thou come here at this unusual hour, when all the gates of the castle are locked? I am not here willingly, answered the voice—but pardon me, Lady, if I have disturbed your rest: I knew not that I was overheard. Sleep had forsaken me; I left a restless couch, and came to waste the irksome hours with gazing on the fair approach of morning, impatient to be dismissed from this castle. Thy words and accents, said *Matilda*, are of a melancholy cast: if thou art unhappy, I pity thee. If poverty afflicts thee, let me know it: I will mention thee to the Princess, whose beneficent soul ever melts for the distressed; and she will relieve thee. I am indeed unhappy, said the stranger, and I know not what wealth is: but I do not complain of the lot which heaven has cast for me: I am young and healthy, and am not ashamed of owing my support to myself—yet think me not proud, or that I disdain your generous offers! I will remember you in my orisons, and I will pray for blessings on your gracious self and your noble mistress. If I sigh, Lady, it is for others, not for myself. Now I have it, Madam! said *Bianca*, whispering the Princess; this is certainly the young peasant; and, by my conscience, he is in love—well this is a charming adventure!—do, Madam, let us sift him. He does not know you, but takes you

for one of my Lady *Hippolita's* women. Art thou not ashamed, *Bianca*! said the Princess: what right have we to pry into the secrets of this young man's heart? he seems virtuous and frank, and tells us he is unhappy: are those circumstances that authorise us to make a property of him? how are we entitled to his confidence? Lord! Madam, how little you know of love! replied *Bianca*: why lovers have no pleasure equal to talking of their mistress! And would you have me become a peasant's confidant? said the Princess. Well, then, let me talk to him, said *Bianca*; though I have the honour of being your Highness's maid of honour, I was not always so great: besides, if love levels ranks, it raises them too: I have a respect for a young man in love. Peace, simpleton! said the Princess; though he said he was unhappy, it does not follow that he must be in love. Think of all that has happened to-day, and tell me, if there are no misfortunes but what love causes!—Stranger, resumed the Princess, if thy misfortunes have not been occasioned by thy own fault, and are within the compass of the Princess *Hippolita's* power to redress, I will take upon me to answer that she will be thy protectress. When thou art dismissed from this castle, repair to holy father *Jerome*, at the convent adjoining to the church of *St. Nicholas*, and make thy story known to him, as far as thou thinkest meet: he will not fail to inform the Princess, who is the mother of all that want her assistance. Farewell: it is not seemly for me to hold farther converse with a man, at this unwonted hour. May the saints guard thee,



gracious Lady! replied the peasant—but oh! if a poor and worthless stranger might presume to beg a minute's audience farther—am I so happy? the casement is not shut—might I venture to ask—Speak quickly, said *Matilda*, the morning dawns apace; should the labourers come into the fields and perceive us—what wouldst thou ask? I know not how—I know not if I dare, said the young stranger, faltering, yet the humanity with which you have spoken to me emboldens—Lady! dare I trust you? Heavens! said *Matilda*, What dost thou mean? with what wouldst thou trust me? speak boldly, if thy secret is fit to be entrusted to a virtuous breast. I would ask, said the peasant, recollecting himself, whether what I have heard from the domestics is true, that the Princess is missing from the castle? What imports it to thee to know? replied *Matilda*. Thy first words bespoke a prudent and becoming gravity. Dost thou come hither to pry into the secrets of *Manfred*? Adieu. I have been mistaken in thee. Saying these words, she shut the casement hastily, without giving the young man time to reply. I had acted more wisely, said the princess to *Bianca*, with some sharpness, if I had let thee converse with this peasant: his inquisitiveness seems of a piece with thy own. It is not fit for me to argue with your Highness, replied *Bianca*; but perhaps the questions, I should have put to him, would have been more to the purpose than those you have been pleased to ask him. Oh! no doubt; said *Matilda*: you are a very discreet personage! may I know what you would have asked him? A by-

stander often sees more of the game than those that play, answered *Bianca*. Does your Highness think, Madam, that his question about my Lady *Isabella* was the result of mere curiosity? No, no, Madam; there is more in it than you great folks are aware of. *Lopez* told me, that all the servants believe this young fellow contrived my Lady *Isabella's* escape: now, pray, Madam, observe—you and I both know that my Lady *Isabella* never much fancied the prince your brother—well! he is killed just in the critical minute—I accuse nobody. A helmet falls from the moon—so my Lord, your father, says; but *Lopez* and all the servants say, that this young spark is a magician, and stole it from *Alfonso's* tomb. Have done with this rhapsody of impertinence, said *Matilda*. Nay, Madam, as you please, cried *Bianca*; yet it is very particular, though, that my Lady *Isabella* should be missing the very same day, and that this young sorcerer should be found at the mouth of the trap-door; I accuse nobody; but if my young Lord came honestly by his death—Dare not, on thy duty, said *Matilda*, to breathe a suspicion on the purity of my dear *Isabella's* fame. Purity or not purity, said *Bianca*, gone she is—a stranger is found that nobody knows: you question him yourself: he tells you he is in love, or unhappy, it is the same thing—nay, he owned he was unhappy about others; and is anybody unhappy about another, unless they are in love with them? And at the very next word, he asks innocently, poor soul! if my Lady *Isabella* is missing. To be sure, said *Matilda*, thy observations are not totally without

foundation—*Isabella's* flight amazes me: the curiosity of this stranger is very particular—yet *Isabella* never concealed a thought from me. So she told you, said *Bianca*, to fish out your secrets; but who knows, Madam, but this stranger may be some prince in disguise? do, Madam, let me open the window, and ask him a few questions! No, replied *Matilda*, I will ask him myself: if he knows aught of *Isabella*, he is not worthy that I should converse farther with him. She was going to open the casement, when they heard the bell ring at the postern gate of the castle, which is on the right hand of the tower, where *Matilda* lay. This prevented the Princess from renewing the conversation with the stranger.

After continuing silent for some time, I am persuaded, said she to *Bianca*, that whatever be the cause of *Isabella's* flight, it had no unworthy motive. If this stranger was accessory to it, she must be satisfied of his fidelity and worth. I observed, did not you, *Bianca*? that his words were tinged with an uncommon infusion of piety. It was no ruffian's speech: his phrases were becoming a man of gentle birth. I told you, Madam, said *Bianca*, that I was sure he was some Prince in disguise. Yet, said *Matilda*, if he was privy to her escape, how will you account for his not accompanying her in her flight? why expose himself unnecessarily and rashly to my father's resentment? As for that, Madam, replied she, if he could get from under the helmet, he will find ways of eluding your father's anger. I do not doubt but he has some talisman or other about him. You resolve everything

into magic, said *Matilda*; but a man, who has any intercourse with infernal spirits, does not dare to make use of those tremendous and holy words, which he uttered. Didst thou not observe with what fervour he vowed to remember me to heaven in his prayers? yes; *Isabella* was undoubtedly convinced of his piety. Commend me to the piety of a young fellow and a damsel, that consult to elope! said *Bianca*. No, no, Madam: my Lady *Isabella* is of another guess mould than you take her for. She used indeed to sigh and lift up her eyes in your company, because she knows you are a saint—but when your back was turned—You wrong her, said *Matilda*: *Isabella* is no hypocrite: she has a due sense of devotion, but never affected a call she has not. On the contrary, she always combated my inclination for the cloyster; and, though I own the mystery she has made to me of her flight, confounds me; though it seems inconsistent with the friendship between us; I cannot forget the disinterested warmth with which she always opposed my taking the veil: she wished to see me married, though my dower would have been a loss to her and my brother's children. For her sake I will believe well of this young peasant. Then you do think there is some liking between them? said *Bianca*. While she was speaking, a servant came hastily into the chamber, and told the Princess that the Lady *Isabella* was found. Where? said *Matilda*. She has taken sanctuary in *St. Nicholas's* church, replied the servant: father *Jerome* has brought the news himself: he is below with his Highness. Where is my mother?

said *Matilda*. She is in her own chamber, Madam, and has asked for you.

*Manfred* had risen at the first dawn of light, and gone to *Hippolita's* apartment, to enquire if she knew aught of *Isabella*. While he was questioning her, word was brought that *Jerome* demanded to speak with him. *Manfred*, little suspecting the cause of the Friar's arrival, and knowing he was employed by *Hippolita* in her charities, ordered him to be admitted, intending to leave them together, while he pursued his search after *Isabella*. Is your business with me or the Princess? said *Manfred*. With both, replied the holy man. The Lady *Isabella*—What of her? interrupted *Manfred*, eagerly: Is at *St. Nicholas's* altar, replied *Jerome*. That is no business of *Hippolita*! said *Manfred*, with confusion: let us retire to my chamber, father; and inform me how she came thither. No, my Lord, replied the good man, with an air of firmness and authority, that daunted even the resolute *Manfred*, who could not help revering the saint-like virtues of *Jerome*—my commission is to both; and, with your Highness's good liking, in the presence of both I shall deliver it—but first, my Lord, I must interrogate the Princess, whether she is acquainted with the cause of the Lady *Isabella's* retirement from your castle. No, on my soul; said *Hippolita*; does *Isabella* charge me with being privy to it?—Father, interrupted *Manfred*, I pay due reverence to your holy profession; but I am sovereign here, and will allow no meddling priest to interfere in the affairs of my domestic. If you have aught to



say, attend me to my chamber—I do not use to let my wife be acquainted with the secret affairs of my state; they are not within a woman's province. My Lord, said the holy man, I am no intruder into the secrets of families. My office is to promote peace, to heal divisions, to preach repentance, and teach mankind to curb their head-strong passions. I forgive your Highness's uncharitable apostrophe: I know my duty, and am the minister of a mightier prince than *Manfred*. Harken to him, who speaks through my organs. *Manfred* trembled with rage and shame. *Hippolita's* countenance declared her astonishment and impatience, to know where this would end: her silence more strongly spoke her observance of *Manfred*.

The Lady *Isabella*, resumed *Jerome*, commends herself to both your Highnesses; she thanks both for the kindness with which she has been treated in your castle: she deplores the loss of your son, and her own misfortune in not becoming the daughter of such wise and noble Princes, whom she shall always respect as parents; she prays for uninterrupted union and felicity between you: (*Manfred's* colour changed) but, as it is no longer possible to be allied to you, she entreats your consent to remain in sanctuary, till she can learn news of her father; or, by the certainty of his death, be at liberty, with the approbation of her guardians, to dispose of herself in suitable marriage. I shall give no such consent, said the Prince; but insist on her return to the castle without delay: I am answerable for her person to her guardians, and will

not brook her being in any hands but my own. Your Highness will recollect whether that can any longer be proper, replied the Friar. I want no monitor, said *Manfred*, colouring; *Isabella's* conduct leaves room for strange suspicions—and that young villain, who was at least the accomplice of her flight, if not the cause of it—The cause! interrupted *Jerome*; was a young man the cause?—This is not to be borne! cried *Manfred*. Am I to be bearded in my own palace by an insolent monk? thou art privy, I guess, to their amours.—I would pray to heaven to clear up your uncharitable surmises, said *Jerome*, if your Highness were not satisfied in your conscience how unjustly you accuse me. I do pray to heaven to pardon that uncharitableness: and I implore your Highness to leave the Princess at peace in that holy place, where she is not liable to be disturbed by such vain and worldly fantasies as discourses of love from any man. Cant not to me, said *Manfred*, but return and bring the Princess to her duty. It is my duty to prevent her return hither; said *Jerome*. She is where orphans and virgins are safest from the snares and wiles of this world; and nothing but a parent's authority shall take her thence. I am her parent, cried *Manfred*, and demand her. She wished to have you for her parent, said the Friar: but heaven that forbade that connection, has for ever dissolved all ties betwixt you: and I announce to your Highness—Stop! audacious man, said *Manfred*, and dread my displeasure. Holy father, said *Hippolita*, it is your office to be no respecter of persons: you must speak as your duty prescribes—

but it is my duty to hear nothing that it pleases not my Lord I should hear. Attend the Prince to his chamber. I will retire to my oratory, and pray the blessed virgin to inspire you with her holy counsels, and to restore the heart of my gracious Lord to its wonted peace and gentleness. Excellent woman! said the Friar. My Lord, I attend your pleasure.

*Manfred*, accompanied by the Friar, passed to his own apartment, where, shutting the door, I perceive, father, said he, that *Isabella* has acquainted you with my purpose. Now, hear my resolve, and obey. Reasons of state, most urgent reasons, my own and the safety of my people, demand that I should have a son. It is in vain to expect an heir from *Hippolita*. I have made choice of *Isabella*. You must bring her back; and you must do more. I know the influence you have with *Hippolita*: her conscience is in your hands. She is, I allow, a faultless woman: her soul is set on heaven, and scorns the little grandeur of this world: you can withdraw her from it entirely. Persuade her to consent to the dissolution of our marriage, and to retire into a monastery: she shall endow one if she will: and shall have the means of being as liberal to your order, as she or you can wish. Thus you will divert the calamities that are hanging over our heads, and have the merit of saving the principality of *Otranto* from destruction. You are a prudent man; and, though the warmth of my temper betrayed me into some unbecoming expressions, I honour your virtue, and wish to be indebted to you for the repose of my life and the preservation of my family.

The will of heaven be done! said the Friar. I am but its worthless instrument. It makes use of my tongue, to tell thee, Prince, of thy unwarrantable designs. The injuries of the virtuous *Hippolita* have mounted to the throne of pity. By me thou art reprimanded for thy adulterous intention of repudiating her: by me thou art warned not to pursue thine incestuous design on thy contracted daughter. Heaven, that delivered her from thy fury, when the judgments, so recently fallen on thy house, ought to have inspired thee with other thoughts, will continue to watch over her. Even I, a poor and despised Friar, am able to protect her from thy violence. I, sinner as I am, and uncharitably reviled by your Highness, as an accomplice of I know not what amours, scorn the allurements with which it has pleased thee to tempt my honesty. I love my order; I honour devout souls; I respect the piety of thy Princess; but will not betray the confidence she reposes in me, nor serve even the cause of religion by foul and sinful compliances; but, forsooth! the welfare of the state depends on your Highness having a son! Heaven mocks the short-sighted views of man. But yester-morn, whose house was so great, so flourishing as *Manfred's*? Where is young *Conrad* now! My Lord, I respect your tears, but I mean not to check them: let them flow, Prince: they will weigh more with heaven, toward the welfare of thy subjects, than a marriage, which, founded on lust or policy, could never prosper. The sceptre, which passed from the race of *Alfonso* to thine, cannot be preserved by a match which the church will

never allow. If it is the will of the Most High that *Manfred's* name must perish, resign yourself, my Lord, to its decrees: and thus deserve a crown that can never pass away. Come, my Lord; I like this sorrow; let us return to the Princess: she is not apprised of your cruel intentions; nor did I mean more than to alarm you. You saw with what gentle patience, with what efforts of love, she heard, she rejected hearing the extent of your guilt. I know she longs to fold you in her arms, and assure you of her unalterable affection. Father, said the Prince, you mistake my compunction: true; I honour *Hippolita's* virtues; I think her a saint; and wish it were for my soul's health to tie faster the knot that has united us—but alas! father, you know not the bitterest of my pangs. It is some time that I have had scruples on the legality of our union: *Hippolita* is related to me in the fourth degree. It is true, we had a dispensation; but I have been informed that she had also been contracted to another. This it is that sits heavy at my heart: to this state of unlawful wedlock I impute the visitation that has fallen on me in the death of *Conrad*! Ease my conscience of this burden: dissolve our marriage, and accomplish the work of godliness which your divine exhortations have commenced in my soul.

How cutting was the anguish which the good man felt, when he perceived this turn in the wily Prince! He trembled for *Hippolita*, whose ruin he saw was determined; and he feared if *Manfred* had no hope of recovering *Isabella*, that his impatience for a son



would direct him to some other object, who might not be equally proof against the temptation of *Manfred's* rank. For some time the holy man remained absorbed in thought. At length, conceiving some hopes from delay, he thought the wisest conduct would be to prevent the Prince from despairing of recovering *Isabella*. Her, the Friar knew he could dispose, from her affection to *Hippolita*, and from the aversion she had expressed to him for *Manfred's* addresses, to second his views, till the censures of the church could be fulminated against a divorce. With this intention, as if struck with the Prince's scruples, he at length said; My Lord, I have been pondering on what your Highness has said: and if, in truth, it is delicacy of conscience that is the real motive of your repugnance to your virtuous Lady, far be it from me to endeavour to harden your heart. The church is an indulgent mother: unfold your griefs to her: she alone can administer comfort to your soul, either by satisfying your conscience, or, upon examination of your scruples, by setting you at liberty, and indulging you in the lawful means of continuing your lineage. In the latter case, if the Lady *Isabella* can be brought to consent—*Manfred*, who concluded that he had either over-reached the good man, or that his first warmth had been but a tribute paid to appearance, was overjoyed at his sudden turn, and repeated the most magnificent promises, if he should succeed by the Friar's mediation. The well-meaning priest suffered him to deceive himself, fully determined to traverse his views, instead of seconding them.

Since we now understand one another, resumed the Prince, I expect, father, that you satisfy me in one point. Who is the youth that I found in the vault? He must have been privy to *Isabella's* flight; tell me truly; is he her lover? or is he an agent for another's passion? I have often suspected *Isabella's* indifference to my son: a thousand circumstances crowd on my mind that confirm that suspicion. She herself was so conscious of it, that, while I discoursed with her, in the gallery, she outran my suspicions, and endeavoured to justify herself from coolness to *Conrad*. The Friar, who knew nothing of the youth, but what he had learnt occasionally from the Princess, ignorant what was become of him, and not sufficiently reflecting on the impetuosity of *Manfred's* temper, conceived that it might not be amiss to sow the seeds of jealousy in his mind: they might be turned to some use hereafter, either by prejudicing the Prince against *Isabella*, if he persisted in that union; or, by diverting his attention to a wrong scent, and employing his thoughts on a visionary intrigue, prevent his engaging in any new pursuit. With this unhappy policy, he answered in a manner to confirm *Manfred* in the belief of some connection between *Isabella* and the youth.

The Prince, whose passions wanted little fuel to throw them into a blaze, fell into a rage at the idea of what the Friar had suggested. I will fathom to the bottom of this intrigue, cried he; and quitting *Jerome* abruptly, with a command to remain there till his return, he hastened to the great hall of the castle, and ordered the peasant to be brought before him.

Thou hardened young impostor! said the Prince, as soon as he saw the youth; what becomes of thy boasted veracity now? it was Providence, was it, and the light of the moon, that discovered the lock of the trap-door to thee? Tell me, audacious boy, who thou art, and how long thou hast been acquainted with the Princess—and take care to answer with less equivocation than thou didst last night, or tortures shall wring the truth from thee. The young man, perceiving that his share in the flight of the Princess was discovered, and concluding that anything he should say, could no longer be of service or detriment to her, replied, I am no impostor, my Lord, nor have I deserved opprobrious language. I answered to every question, your Highness put to me last night, with the same veracity that I shall speak now; and that will not be from fear of your tortures, but because my soul abhors a falsehood. Please to repeat your questions, my Lord; I am ready to give you all the satisfaction in my power. You know my questions, replied the Prince, and only want time to prepare an evasion. Speak directly; who art thou? and how long hast thou been known to the Princess? I am a labourer at the next village, said the peasant; my name is *Theodore*. The Princess found me in the vault last night; before that hour I never was in her presence. I may believe as much, or as little as I please of this, said *Manfred*; but I will hear thy own story, before I examine into the truth of it. Tell me what reason did the Princess give thee for making her escape? thy life depends on thy answer. She told me, replied

*Theodore*, that she was on the brink of destruction, and that if she could not escape from the castle, she was in danger, in a few moments, of being made miserable for ever. And on this slight foundation, on a silly girl's report, said *Manfred*, thou didst hazard my displeasure? I fear no man's displeasure, said *Theodore*, when a woman in distress puts herself under my protection. During this examination, *Matilda* was going to the apartment of *Hippolita*. At the upper end of the hall, where *Manfred* sat, was a boarded gallery with latticed windows, through which *Matilda* and *Bianca* were to pass. Hearing her father's voice, and seeing the servants assembled round him, she stopped to learn the occasion. The prisoner soon drew her attention; the steady and composed manner in which he answered, and the gallantry of his last reply, which were the first words she heard distinctly, interested her in his favour. His person was noble, handsome, and commanding, even in that situation; but his countenance soon engrossed her whole care. Heavens! *Bianca*! said the Princess softly, do I dream? or is not that youth the exact resemblance of *Alfonso's* picture in the gallery? She could say no more, for her father's voice grew louder at every word. This bravado, said he, surpasses all thy former insolence. Thou shalt experience the wrath with which thou dar'st to trifle. Seize him, continued *Manfred*, and bind him: the first news the Princess hears of her champion shall be, that he has lost his head for her sake. The injustice of which thou art guilty towards me, said *Theodore*, convinces

me that I have done a good deed, in delivering the Princess from thy tyranny. May she be happy, whatever becomes of me! This is a lover! cried *Manfred* in a rage: a peasant within sight of death is not animated by such sentiments. Tell me, tell me, rash boy, who thou art, or the rack shall force thy secret from thee. Thou hast threatened me with death already, saith the youth, for the truth I have told thee: if that is all the encouragement I am to expect for sincerity, I am not tempted to indulge thy vain curiosity farther. Then thou wilt not speak? said *Manfred*. I will not, replied he. Bear him away into the court-yard, said *Manfred*: I will see his head this instant severed from his body. *Matilda* fainted at hearing these words. *Bianca* shrieked, and cried, Help! help! the Princess is dead! *Manfred* started at this ejaculation, and demanded what was the matter? The young peasant, who heard it too, was struck with horror, and asked eagerly the same question; but *Manfred* ordered him to be hurried into the court, and kept there for execution, till he had informed himself of the cause of *Bianca's* shrieks. When he learned the meaning, he treated it as a womanish panic, and ordering *Matilda* to be carried to her apartment, he rushed into the court, and calling for one of his guards bade *Theodore* kneel down and prepare to receive the fatal blow.

The undaunted youth received the bitter sentence with a resignation that touched every heart but *Manfred's*. He wished earnestly to know the meaning of the words he had heard relating to the Princess; but



fearing to exasperate the tyrant more against her, he desisted. The only boon he deigned to ask, was, that he might be permitted to have a confessor, and make his peace with heaven. *Manfred*, who hoped, by the confessor's means, to come at the youth's history, readily granted his request: and being convinced that father *Jerome* was now in his interest, he ordered him to be called and shrieve the prisoner. The holy man, who had little foreseen the catastrophe that his imprudence occasioned, fell on his knees to the Prince, and adjured him, in the most solemn manner, not to shed innocent blood. He accused himself, in the bitterest terms, for his indiscretion, endeavoured to exculpate the youth, and left no method untried to soften the tyrant's rage.

*Manfred*, more incensed than appeased by *Jerome's* intercession, whose retraction now made him suspect he had been imposed upon by both, commanded the Friar to do his duty, telling him he would not allow the prisoner many minutes for confession. Nor do I ask many, my Lord; said the unhappy young man. My sins, thank heaven! have not been numerous; nor exceed what might be expected at my years. Dry your tears, good father, and let us dispatch: this is a bad world; nor have I had cause to leave it with regret. Oh! wretched youth! said *Jerome*; how canst thou bear the sight of me with patience? I am thy murderer! it is I have brought this dismal hour upon thee. I forgive thee from my soul, said the youth, as I hope heaven will pardon me. Hear my confession, father; and give me thy blessing. How

can I prepare thee for thy passage, as I ought? said *Jerome*. Thou canst not be saved without pardoning thy foes—and canst thou forgive that impious man there? I can, said *Theodore*; I do—And does not this touch thee? cruel Prince! said the Friar. I sent for thee to confess him, said *Manfred* sternly; not to plead for him. Thou didst first incense me against him—his blood be upon thy head! It will! it will! said the good man, in an agony of sorrow. Thou and I must never hope to go where this blessed youth is going! Dispatch! said *Manfred*: I am no more to be moved by the whining of priests, than by the shrieks of women. What! said the youth; is it possible that my fate could have occasioned what I heard! is the Princess then again in thy power? Thou dost but remember me of my wrath, said *Manfred*: prepare thee, for this moment is thy last. The youth, who felt his indignation rise, and who was touched with the sorrow which he saw he had infused into all the spectators, as well as into the Friar, suppressed his emotions, and putting off his doublet, and unbuttoning his collar, knelt down to his prayers. As he stooped, his shirt slipped down below his shoulder, and discovered the mark of a bloody arrow. Gracious heaven! cried the holy man, starting, what do I see! It is my child! my *Theodore*!

The passions that ensued, must be conceived; they cannot be painted. The tears of the assistants were suspended by wonder, rather than stopped by joy. They seemed to inquire into the eyes of their Lord what they ought to feel. Surprise, doubt, tenderness,

respect, succeeded each other in the countenance of the youth. He received, with modest submission, the effusion of the old man's tears and embraces; yet, afraid of giving a loose to hope, and suspecting, from what had passed, the inflexibility of *Manfred's* temper, he cast a glance towards the Prince, as if to say, canst thou be unmoved at such a scene as this?

*Manfred's* heart was capable of being touched. He forgot his anger in his astonishment; yet his pride forbade his owning himself affected. He even doubted whether this discovery was not a contrivance of the Friar to save the youth. What may this mean? said he: how can he be thy son? is it consistent with thy profession, or reputed sanctity, to avow a peasant's offspring for the fruit of thy irregular amours? Oh! God, said the holy man, dost thou question his being mine? could I feel the anguish I do, if I were not his father? Spare him! good Prince, spare him! and revile me as thou pleasest. Spare him! spare him! cried the attendants, for this good man's sake! Peace! said *Manfred*, sternly: I must know more, ere I am disposed to pardon. A saint's bastard may be no saint himself. Injurious Lord! said *Theodore*; add not insult to cruelty. If I am this venerable man's son, though no Prince, as thou art, know, the blood that flows in my veins—Yes, said the Friar, interrupting him, his blood is noble; nor is he that abject thing, my Lord, you speak him. He is my lawful son; and *Sicily* can boast of few houses more ancient than that of *Falconara*—but alas, my Lord, what is blood! what is nobility! we are all reptiles, miserable, sinful

creatures. It is piety alone that can distinguish us from the dust whence we sprung, and whither we must return. Truce to your sermon, said *Manfred*; you forget, you are no longer Friar *Jerome*, but the Count of *Falconara*. Let me know your history; you will have time enough to moralize hereafter, if you should not happen to obtain the grace of that sturdy criminal there. Mother of God! said the Friar, is it possible my Lord can refuse a father the life of his only, his long-lost child! Trample me, my Lord, scorn, afflict me, accept my life for his, but spare my son! Thou canst feel then, said *Manfred*, what it is to lose an only son! a little hour ago, thou didst preach up resignation to me: *My house, if fate so pleased, must perish—but the Count of Falconara—* Alas! my Lord, said *Jerome*, I confess I have offended; but aggravate not an old man's sufferings! I boast not of my family, nor think of such vanities: it is nature that pleads for this boy; it is the memory of the dear woman that bore him. Is she, *Theodore*, is she dead?—Her soul has long been with the blessed: Said *Theodore*. Oh! how? cried *Jerome*, tell me—No—she is happy! Thou art all my care now! Most dread Lord! will you—will you grant me my poor boy's life? Return to thy convent, answered *Manfred*; conduct the Princess hither; obey me in what else thou knowest; and I promise thee the life of thy son. Oh! my Lord, said *Jerome*, is my honesty the price I must pay for this dear youth's safety? For me! cried *Theodore*: let me die a thousand deaths, rather than stain thy conscience. What is it the tyrant

would exact of thee? is the Princess still safe from his power? protect her, thou venerable old man; and let all the weight of his wrath fall on me. *Jerome* endeavoured to check the impetuosity of the youth; and ere *Manfred* could reply, the trampling of horses was heard, and a brazen trumpet, which hung without the gate of the castle, was suddenly sounded. At the same instant, the sable plumes on the enchanted helmet, which still remained at the other end of the court, were tempestuously agitated, and nodded thrice, as if bowed by some invisible wearer.



### CHAPTER III

*MANFRED'S* heart mis-gave him, when he beheld the plumage on the miraculous casque shaken in concert with the sounding of the brazen trumpet. Father! said he to *Jerome*, whom he now ceased to treat as Count of *Falconara*, what mean these portents? If I have offended—the plumes were shaken with greater violence than before. Unhappy Prince that I am! cried *Manfred*: Holy father! will you not assist me with your prayers? My Lord, replied *Jerome*, heaven is no doubt displeased with your mockery of its servants. Submit yourself to the church; and cease to persecute her ministers. Dismiss this innocent youth; and learn to respect the holy character I wear: heaven will not be trifled with: you see—the trumpet sounded again. I acknowledge I have been too hasty, said *Manfred*. Father, do you go to the wicket, and demand who is at the gate. Do you grant me the life of *Theodore*? replied the Friar. I do, said *Manfred*; but inquire who is without!

*Jerome*, falling on the neck of his son, discharged a flood of tears that spoke the fulness of his soul. You promised to go to the gate, said *Manfred*. I thought, replied the Friar, your highness would excuse my thanking you first in this tribute of my heart. Go, dearest sir, said *Theodore*; obey the Prince—I do not deserve that you should delay his satisfaction for me.

*Jerome*, inquiring who was without, was answered, a Herald. From whom? said he. From the Knight of the gigantic sabre; said the Herald; and I must speak with the usurper of *Otranto*. *Jerome* returned to the Prince, and did not fail to repeat the message, in the very words it had been uttered. The first sounds struck *Manfred* with terror; but when he heard himself stiled usurper, his rage re-kindled, and all his courage revived. Usurper! insolent villain! cried he, who dares to question my title? Retire, Father; this is no business for monks: I will meet this presumptuous man myself. Go to your convent, and prepare the Princess's return: your son shall be a hostage for your fidelity: his life depends on your obedience. Good heaven! my Lord, cried *Jerome*, your Highness did but this instant freely pardon my child—have you so soon forgot the interposition of heaven? Heaven, replied *Manfred*, does not send Heralds to question the title of a lawful Prince; I doubt whether it even notifies its will through Friars—but that is your affair, not mine. At present you know my pleasure; and it is not a saucy Herald that shall save your son, if you do not return with the Princess.

It was in vain for the holy man to reply. *Manfred* commanded him to be conducted to the postern gate, and shut out from the castle: and he ordered some of his attendants to carry *Theodore* to the top of the black Tower, and guard him strictly; scarce permitting the father and son to exchange a hasty embrace at parting. He then withdrew to the hall, and, seating himself in

princely state, ordered the Herald to be admitted to his presence.

Well! thou insolent! said the Prince, what wouldst thou with me? I come, replied he, to thee, *Manfred*, usurper of the principality of *Otranto*, from the renowned and invincible Knight, the Knight of the gigantic sabre: in the name of his Lord, *Frederic* Marquis of *Vicenza*, he demands the Lady *Isabella*, daughter of that Prince, whom thou hast basely, and traitorously got into thy power, by bribing her false guardians during his absence; and he requires thee to resign the principality of *Otranto*, which thou hast usurped from the said Lord *Frederic*, the nearest of blood to the last rightful Lord, *Alfonso* the good. If thou dost not instantly comply with these just demands he defies thee to single combat to the last extremity. And so saying, the Herald cast down his warder.

And where is this braggart, who sends thee? said *Manfred*. At the distance of a league, said the Herald: he comes to make good his Lord's claim against thee, as he is a true Knight, and thou an usurper and ravisher.

Injurious as this challenge was, *Manfred* reflected that it was not his interest to provoke the Marquis. He knew how well founded the claim of *Frederic* was; nor was this the first time he had heard of it. *Frederic's* ancestors had assumed the stile of Princes of *Otranto*, from the death of *Alfonso* the good without issue: but *Manfred*, his father, and grandfather, had been too powerful for the house of *Vicenza* to dispossess them. *Frederic*, a martial and amorous young Prince, had

married a beautiful young Lady of whom he was enamoured, and who had died in childbed of *Isabella*. Her death affected him so much, that he had taken the cross, and gone to the holy land, where he was wounded in an engagement against the infidels, made prisoner, and reported to be dead. When the news reached *Manfred's* ears, he bribed the guardians of the Lady *Isabella* to deliver her up to him, as a bride for his son *Conrad*, by which alliance he had proposed to unite the claims of the two houses. This motive, on *Conrad's* death, had co-operated to make him so suddenly resolve on espousing her himself; and the same reflection determined him now to endeavour at obtaining the consent of *Frederic* to this marriage. A like policy inspired him with the thought of inviting *Frederic's* champion into his castle, lest he should be informed of *Isabella's* flight, which he strictly enjoined his domestics not to disclose to any of the Knight's retinue.

Herald, said *Manfred*, as soon as he had digested these reflections, return to thy master, and tell him ere we liquidate our differences by the sword, *Manfred* would hold some converse with him. Bid him welcome to my castle, where, by my faith, as I am a true Knight, he shall have courteous reception, and full security for himself and followers. If we cannot adjust our quarrel by amicable means, I swear he shall depart in safety, and shall have full satisfaction, according to the laws of arms: so help me God, and his holy Trinity! The Herald made three obeisances and retired.

During this interview, *Jerome's* mind was agitated by a thousand contrary passions. He trembled for the life of his son, and his first thought was to persuade *Isabella* to return to the castle. Yet he was scarce less alarmed at the thought of her union with *Manfred*. He dreaded *Hippolita's* unbounded submission to the will of her Lord; and though he did not doubt but he could alarm her piety not to consent to a divorce, if he could get access to her; yet, should *Manfred* discover that the obstruction came from him, it might be equally fatal to *Theodore*. He was impatient to know whence came the Herald, who, with so little management, had questioned the title of *Manfred*: yet he did not dare absent himself from the convent, lest *Isabella* should leave it, and her flight be imputed to him. He returned disconsolately to the monastery, uncertain on what conduct to resolve. A monk, who met him in the porch, and observed his melancholy air, said, Alas! brother, is it then true that we have lost our excellent Princess *Hippolita*? The holy man started, and cried, What meanest thou, brother? I come this instant from the castle, and left her in perfect health. *Martelli*, replied the other Friar, passed by the convent, but a quarter of an hour ago, on his way from the castle, and reported that her Highness was dead. All our brethren are gone to the chapel to pray for her happy transit to a better life, and willed me to wait thy arrival. They know thy holy attachment to that good lady, and are anxious for the affliction it will cause in thee; indeed we have all reason to weep; she was a mother to our house; but this life is but a pilgrim-



age; we must not murmur; we shall all follow her! may our end be like hers! Good brother, thou dreamest, said *Jerome*: I tell thee I come from the castle, and left the Princess well. Where is the Lady *Isabella*? Poor gentlewoman! replied the Friar; I told her the sad news, and offered her spiritual comfort; I reminded her of the transitory condition of mortality, and advised her to take the veil: I quoted the example of the holy Princess *Sanchia* of *Arragon*. Thy zeal was laudable, said *Jerome*, impatiently; but at present it was unnecessary: *Hippolita* is well; at least I trust in the Lord she is; I heard nothing to the contrary; yet, methinks, the Prince's earnestness—well, brother, but where is the Lady *Isabella*? I know not, said the Friar; she wept much, and said she would retire to her chamber.

*Jerome* left his comrade abruptly, and hastened to the Princess, but she was not in her chamber. He enquired of the domestics of the convent, but could learn no news of her. He searched in vain throughout the monastery and the church, and dispatched messengers round the neighbourhood, to get intelligence if she had been seen; but to no purpose. Nothing could equal the good man's perplexity. He judged that *Isabella*, suspecting *Manfred* of having precipitated his wife's death, had taken the alarm, and withdrawn herself to some more secret place of concealment. This new flight would probably carry the Prince's fury to the height. The report of *Hippolita's* death, though it seemed almost incredible, increased his consternation; and though *Isabella's* escape be-

spoke her aversion of *Manfred* for a husband, *Jerome* could feel no comfort from it, while it endangered the life of his son. He determined to return to the castle, and made several of his brethren accompany him to attest his innocence to *Manfred*, and, if necessary, join their intercessions with his for *Theodore*.

The Prince, in the mean time, had passed into the court, and ordered the gates of the castle to be flung open, for the reception of the stranger Knight and his train. In a few minutes the cavalcade arrived. First came two harbingers with wands. Next a Herald, followed by two pages and two trumpeters. Then an hundred foot guards. These were attended by as many horse. After them fifty footmen, cloathed in scarlet and black, the colours of the Knight. Then a led horse. Two Heralds on each side of a gentleman on horseback, bearing a banner, with the arms of *Vicenza* and *Otranto* quarterly; a circumstance that much offended *Manfred*, but he stifled his resentment. Two more pages. The Knight's confessor, telling his beads. Fifty more footmen, clad as before. Two Knights, habited in complete armour, their beavers down, comrades to the principal Knight. The squires of the two Knights, carrying their shields and devices. The Knight's own squire. An hundred gentlemens bearing an enormous sword, and seeming to faint under the weight of it. The Knight himself on a chestnut steed, in complete armour, his lance in the rest, his face entirely concealed by his vizor, which was surmounted by a large plume of scarlet and black feathers. Fifty foot-guards, with drums and trumpets, closed

the procession, which wheeled off to the right and left, to make room for the principal Knight.

As soon as he approached the gate, he stopped; and the Herald advancing, read again the words of the challenge. *Manfred's* eyes were fixed on the gigantic sword, and he scarce seemed to attend to the cartel: but his attention was soon diverted by a tempest of wind that rose behind him. He turned and beheld the plumes of the enchanted helmet, agitated in the same extraordinary manner as before. It required intrepidity like *Manfred's* not to sink under a concurrence of circumstances, that seemed to announce his fate. Yet scorning, in the presence of strangers, to betray the courage he had always manifested, he said boldly, Sir Knight, whoever thou art, I bid thee welcome. If thou art of mortal mould, thy valour shall meet its equal: and if thou art a true Knight, thou wilt scorn to employ sorcery to carry thy point. Be these omens from heaven or hell, *Manfred* trusts to the righteousness of his cause, and to the aid of *St. Nicholas*, who has ever protected his house. Alight, Sir Knight, and repose thyself: to-morrow thou shalt have a fair field; and heaven befriend the juster side!

The Knight made no reply, but dismounting, was conducted by *Manfred* to the great hall of the castle. As they traversed the court, the Knight stopped to gaze on the miraculous casque; and, kneeling down, seemed to pray inwardly for some minutes. Rising, he made a sign to the Prince to lead on. As soon as they entered the hall, *Manfred* proposed to the

stranger to disarm, but the Knight shook his head in token of refusal. Sir Knight, said *Manfred*, this is not courteous; but, by my good faith, I will not cross thee; nor shalt thou have cause to complain of the Prince of *Otranto*. No treachery is designed on my part; I hope none is intended on thine; here, take my gage (giving him his ring); your friends and you shall enjoy the laws of hospitality. Rest here, until refreshments are brought: I will but give orders for the accommodation of your train, and return to you. The three knights bowed, as accepting his courtesy. *Manfred* directed the stranger's retinue to be conducted to an adjacent hospital, founded by the Princess *Hippolita* for the reception of pilgrims. As they made the circuit of the court to return towards the gate, the gigantic sword burst from the supporters, and, falling to the ground opposite to the helmet, remained immovable. *Manfred*, almost hardened to preternatural appearances, surmounted the shock of this new prodigy; and returning to the hall, where by this time the feast was ready, he invited his silent guests to take their places. *Manfred*, however ill his heart was at ease, endeavoured to inspire the company with mirth. He put several questions to them, but was answered only by signs. They raised their vizors but sufficiently to feed themselves, and that but sparingly. Sirs, said the Prince, ye are the first guests I ever treated within these walls, who scorned to hold intercourse with me; nor has it oft been customary, I ween, for Princes to hazard their state and dignity against strangers and mutes. You say you come in

the name of *Frederic of Vicenza*; I have heard that he was a gallant and courteous Knight; nor would he, I am bold to say, think it beneath him to mix in social converse with a Prince who is his equal, and not unknown by deeds in arms. Still ye are silent—well! be it as it may; by the laws of hospitality and chivalry, ye are masters under this roof; ye shall do your pleasure—but come, give me a goblet of wine; ye will not refuse to pledge me to the healths of your fair mistresses? The principal Knight sighed and crossed himself, and was rising from the board—Sir Knight, said *Manfred*, what I said was but in sport: I shall constrain you in nothing; use your good liking. Since mirth is not your mood, let us be sad. Business may hit your fancies better: let us withdraw; and hear if what I have to unfold, may be better relished, than the vain efforts I have made for your pastime.

*Manfred*, then conducting the three Knights into an inner chamber, shut the door, and inviting them to be seated, began thus, addressing himself to the chief personage.

You come, Sir Knight, as I understand, in the name of the Marquis of *Vicenza*, to re-demand the Lady *Isabella*, his daughter, who has been contracted, in the face of holy church, to my son, by the consent of her legal guardians; and to require me to resign my dominions to your Lord, who gives himself for the nearest of blood to Prince *Alfonso*, whose soul God rest! I shall speak to the latter article of your demands first. You must know—your Lord knows, that I enjoy the principality of *Otranto* from my father Don



*Manuel*, as he received it from his father *Don Ricardo*. *Alfonso*, their predecessor, dying childless in the *Holy Land*, bequeathed his estates to my grandfather *Don Ricardo*, in consideration of his faithful services. The stranger shook his head—Sir Knight, said *Manfred*, warmly, *Ricardo* was a valiant and upright man; he was a pious man; witness his munificent foundation of the adjoining church and two convents. He was peculiarly patronised by *St. Nicholas*—my grandfather was incapable—I say, Sir, *Don Ricardo* was incapable—excuse me, your interruption has disordered me. I venerate the memory of my grandfather—well! Sirs, he held this estate; he held it by his good sword, and by the favour of *St. Nicholas*—so did my father; and so, Sirs, will I, come what come will—but *Frederic*, your Lord, is nearest in blood—I have consented to put my title to the issue of the sword—does that imply a vicious title? I might have asked, where is *Frederic* your Lord? Report speaks him dead in captivity. You say, your actions say, he lives—I question it not—I might, sirs, I might, but I do not. Other Princes would bid *Frederic* take his inheritance by force, if he can; they would not stake their dignity on a single combat—they would not submit it to the decision of unknown mutes—pardon me, gentlemen, I am too warm; but suppose yourselves in my situation; as ye are stout Knights, would it not move your choler, to have your own, and the honour of your ancestors, called in question? but to the point. Ye require me to deliver up the Lady *Isabella*—sirs, I must ask if ye are

authorised to receive her? The Knight nodded. Receive her, continued *Manfred*; well! you are authorised to receive her; but, gentle Knight, may I ask if you have full powers? The Knight nodded. 'Tis well, said *Manfred*; then hear what I have to offer: ye see, gentlemen, before you, the most unhappy of men! (he began to weep) afford me your compassion; I am entitled to it; indeed I am. Know, I have lost my only hope, my joy, the support of my house—*Conrad* died yester-morning. The Knights discovered signs of surprise. Yes, sirs, fate has disposed of my son; *Isabella* is at liberty—Do you then restore her? cried the chief Knight, breaking silence. Afford me your patience, said *Manfred*. I rejoice to find, by this testimony of your good will, that this matter may be adjusted without blood. It is no interest of mine dictates what little I have farther to say. Ye behold in me a man disgusted with the world: the loss of my son has weaned me from earthly cares. Power and greatness have no longer any charms in my eyes. I wished to transmit the sceptre I had received from my ancestors with honour to my son—but that is over! life itself is so indifferent to me, that I accepted your defiance with joy: a good Knight cannot go to the grave with more satisfaction, than when falling in his vocation: whatever is the will of heaven, I submit; for, alas! sirs, I am a man of many sorrows. *Manfred* is no object of envy—but no doubt you are acquainted with my story. The Knight made signs of ignorance, and seemed curious to have *Manfred* proceed. Is it possible, sirs, con-

tinued the Prince, that my story should be a secret to you; have you heard nothing relating to me and the Princess *Hippolita*? They shook their heads. No! thus then, sirs, it is. You think me ambitious: ambition, alas! is composed of more rugged materials. If I were ambitious, I should not, for so many years, have been a prey to all the hell of conscientious scruples—but I weary your patience: I will be brief. Know then, that I have long been troubled in mind on my union with the Princess *Hippolita*. Oh! sirs, if ye were acquainted with that excellent woman! if ye knew that I adore her like a mistress, and cherish her as a friend—but man was not born for perfect happiness! she shares my scruples, and, with her consent, I have brought this matter before the church, for we are related within the forbidden degrees. I expect every hour the definitive sentence that must separate us for ever—I am sure you feel for me—I see you do—pardon these tears! The Knights gazed on each other, wondering where this would end. *Manfred* continued: The death of my son betiding, while my soul was under this anxiety, I thought of nothing but resigning my dominions, and retiring for ever from the sight of mankind. My only difficulty was to fix on a successor, who would be tender of my people, and to dispose of the Lady *Isabella*, who is dear to me as my own blood. I was willing to restore the line of *Alfonso*, even in his most distant kindred: and though, pardon me, I am satisfied it was his will, that *Ricardo's* lineage should take place of his own relations; yet where was I to search for those

relations? I knew of none but *Frederic* your Lord; he was a captive to the infidels, or dead; and were he living, and at home, would he quit the flourishing state of *Vicenza*, for the inconsiderable principality of *Otranto*? if he would not, could I bear the thought of seeing a hard, unfeeling viceroy set over my poor faithful people? for, sirs, I love my people, and, thank heaven, am beloved by them: but ye will ask, whither tends this long discourse? briefly then, thus, sirs. Heaven, in your arrival, seems to point out a remedy for those difficulties and my misfortunes. The Lady *Isabella* is at liberty; I shall soon be so. I would submit to anything for the good of my people—were it not the best, the only way to extinguish the feuds between our families, if I was to take the Lady *Isabella* to wife—you start—but, though *Hippolita's* virtues will ever be dear to me, a Prince must not consider himself; he is born for his people. A servant at that instant entering the chamber, apprised *Manfred* that *Ferome* and several of his brethren demanded immediate access to him.

The Prince, provoked at this interruption, and fearing that the Friar would discover to the strangers that *Isabella* had taken sanctuary, was going to forbid *Ferome's* entrance. But recollecting that he was certainly arrived to notify the Princess's return, *Manfred* began to excuse himself to the Knights for leaving them for a few moments, but was prevented by the arrival of the Friars. *Manfred* angrily reprimanded them for their intrusion, and would have forced them back from the chamber; but *Ferome* was too much

agitated to be repulsed. He declared aloud the flight of *Isabella*, with protestations of his own innocence. *Manfred*, distracted at the news, and not less at its coming to the knowledge of the strangers, uttered nothing but incoherent sentences; now upbraiding the Friar, now apologising to the Knights, earnest to know what was become of *Isabella*, yet equally afraid of their knowing; impatient to pursue her, yet dreading to have them join in the pursuit. He offered to dispatch messengers in quest of her, but the chief Knight, no longer keeping silence, reproached *Manfred*, in bitter terms, for his dark and ambiguous dealing, and demanded the cause of *Isabella's* first absence from the castle. *Manfred*, casting a stern look at *Jerome*, implying a command of silence, pretended that, on *Conrad's* death, he had placed her in sanctuary, until he could determine how to dispose of her. *Jerome*, who trembled for his son's life, did not dare to contradict this falsehood, but one of his brethren, not under the same anxiety, declared, frankly, that she had fled to their church in the preceding night. The Prince, in vain, endeavoured to stop this discovery, which overwhelmed him with shame and confusion. The principal stranger, amazed at the contradictions he heard, and more than half persuaded that *Manfred* had secreted the Princess, notwithstanding the concern he expressed at her flight, rushing to the door, said, Thou traitor Prince! *Isabella* shall be found. *Manfred* endeavoured to hold him, but the other Knights assisting their comrade, he broke from the Prince, and hastened



into the court, demanding his attendants. *Manfred*, finding it in vain to divert him from the pursuit, offered to accompany him, and summoning his attendants, and taking *Ferome* and some of the Friars to guide them, they issued from the castle; *Manfred* privately giving orders to have the Knight's company secured, while to the Knight he affected to dispatch a messenger to require their assistance.

The company had no sooner quitted the castle, than *Matilda*, who felt herself deeply interested for the young peasant, since she had seen him condemned to death in the hall, and whose thoughts had been taken up with concerting measures to save him, was informed by some of the female attendants, that *Manfred* had dispatched all his men various ways in pursuit of *Isabella*. He had, in his hurry, given this order in general terms, not meaning to extend it to the guard he had set upon *Theodore*, but forgetting it. The domestics, officious to obey so peremptory a Prince, and urged by their own curiosity, and love of novelty, to join in any precipitate chase, had, to a man, left the castle. *Matilda* disengaged herself from her women, stole up to the black tower, and unbolting the door, presented herself to the astonished *Theodore*. Young man, said she, though filial duty and womanly modesty condemn the step I am taking, yet holy charity, surmounting all other ties, justifies this act. Fly, the doors of thy prison are open: my father and his domestics are absent, but they may soon return; be gone in safety, and may the angels of heaven direct thy course!—Thou art surely one of those angels!

said the enraptured *Theodore*: none but a blessed saint could speak, could act, could look, like thee!—May I not know the name of my divine protectress? Methought thou namedst thy father: is it possible? can *Manfred's* blood feel holy pity?—Lovely Lady, thou answerest not—but how art thou here thyself? why dost thou neglect thy own safety, and waste a thought on a wretch like *Theodore*? Let us fly together: the life thou bestowest shall be dedicated to thy defence.—Alas! thou mistakest, said *Matilda*, sighing; I am *Manfred's* daughter, but no dangers await me.—Amazement! said *Theodore*; but last night I blessed myself for yielding thee the service thy gracious compassion so charitably returns me now.—Still thou art in an error, said the Princess; but this is no time for explanation. Fly, virtuous youth, while it is in my power to save thee: should my father return, thou and I both should, indeed, have cause to tremble.—How, said *Theodore*, thinkest thou, charming maid, that I will accept of life at the hazard of aught calamitous to thee? better I endured a thousand deaths.—I run no risk, said *Matilda*, but by thy delay. Depart, it cannot be known that I assisted thy flight.—Swear by the saints above, said *Theodore*, that thou canst not be suspected; else here I vow to await whatever can befall me—Oh! thou art too generous, said *Matilda*, but rest assured that no suspicion can alight on me.—Give me thy beauteous hand, in token that thou dost not deceive me, said *Theodore*, and let me bathe it with the warm tears of gratitude.—Forbear, said the Princess, this must not

be.—Alas! said *Theodore*, I have never known but calamity until this hour—perhaps shall never know other fortune again: suffer the chaste raptures of holy gratitude: 'tis my soul would print its effusions on thy hand.—Forbear and be gone, said *Matilda*: how would *Isabella* approve of seeing thee at my feet?—Who is *Isabella*? said the young man, with surprise.—Ah me! I fear, said the Princess, I am serving a deceitful one!—hast thou forgot thy curiosity this morning?—Thy looks, thy actions, all thy beauteous self, seems an emanation of divinity, said *Theodore*, but thy words are dark and mysterious,—speak, Lady; speak to thy servant's comprehension.—Thou understandest but too well! said *Matilda*: but once more I command thee to be gone: thy blood, which I may preserve, will be on my head, if I waste the time in vain discourse.—I go, Lady, said *Theodore*, because it is thy will, and because I would not bring the grey hairs of my father with sorrow to the grave. Say but, adored Lady, that I have thy gentle pity.—Stay, said *Matilda*, I will conduct thee to the subterraneous vault by which *Isabella* escaped; it will lead thee to the church of *St. Nicholas*, where thou mayest take sanctuary.—What, said *Theodore*, was it another, and not thy lovely self, that I assisted to find the subterraneous passage?—It was, said *Matilda*, but ask no more: I tremble to see thee still abide here: fly to the sanctuary.—To sanctuary, said *Theodore*, no, Princess, sanctuaries are for helpless damsels, or for criminals. *Theodore's* soul is free from guilt, nor will wear the appearance of it. Give me a sword,







*Theodore and Matilda.*



Lady, and thy father shall learn that *Theodore* scorns an ignominious flight.—Rash youth! said *Matilda*, thou wouldst not dare to lift thy presumptuous arm against the Prince of *Otranto*?—Not against thy father, indeed, I dare not; said *Theodore*, excuse me, Lady, I had forgotten—but could I gaze on thee, and remember thou art sprung from the tyrant *Manfred*?—but he is thy father, and, from this moment, my injuries are buried in oblivion. A deep and hollow groan, which seemed to come from above, startled the Princess and *Theodore*. Good heaven! we are overheard! said the Princess. They listened, but perceiving no further noise, they both concluded it the effect of pent-up vapours; and the Princess, preceding *Theodore* softly, carried him to her father's armoury, where, equipping him with a complete suit, he was conducted by *Matilda* to the postern gate. Avoid the town, said the Princess, and all the western side of the castle: 'tis there the search must be making by *Manfred* and the strangers: but hie thee to the opposite quarter. Yonder, behind that forest, to the east, is a chain of rocks, hollowed into a labyrinth of caverns, that reach to the sea-coast. There thou mayest lie concealed, till thou canst make signs to some vessel to put on shore and take thee off. Go; heaven be thy guide!—and sometimes in thy prayers remember—*Matilda*! *Theodore* flung himself at her feet, and seizing her lily hand, which with struggles she suffered him to kiss, he vowed, on the earliest opportunity, to get himself knighted, and fervently entreated her permission to swear himself eternally

her Knight.—Ere the Princess could reply, a clap of thunder was suddenly heard, that shook the battlements. *Theodore*, regardless of the tempest, would have urged his suit; but the Princess, dismayed, retreated hastily into the castle, and commanded the youth to be gone, with an air that would not be disobeyed. He sighed, and retired, but with eyes fixed on the gate, until *Matilda*, closing it, put an end to an interview, in which the hearts of both had drunk so deeply of a passion, which both now tasted for the first time.

*Theodore* went pensively to the convent, to acquaint his father with his deliverance. There he learned the absence of *Jerome*, and the pursuit that was making after the Lady *Isabella*, with some particulars of whose story he now first became acquainted. The generous gallantry of his nature prompted him to wish to assist her; but the monks could lend him no lights to guess at the route she had taken. He was not tempted to wander far in search of her, for the idea of *Matilda* had imprinted itself so strongly on his heart, that he could not bear to absent himself at much distance from her abode. The tenderness *Jerome* had expressed for him concurred to confirm this reluctance; and he even persuaded himself that filial affection was the chief cause of his hovering between the castle and monastery. Until *Jerome* should return at night, *Theodore* at length determined to repair to the forest that *Matilda* had pointed out to him. Arriving there, he sought the gloomiest shades, as best suited to the pleasing melancholy that reigned in his mind. In





*Theodore and Isabella.*



*Theresa and Isabella*



this mood he roved insensibly to the caves which had formerly served as a retreat to hermits, and were now reported round the country to be haunted by evil spirits. He recollected to have heard this tradition; and being of a brave and adventurous disposition, he willingly indulged his curiosity in exploring the secret recesses of this labyrinth. He had not penetrated far, before he thought he heard the steps of some person who seemed to retreat before him. *Theodore*, though firmly grounded in all our holy faith enjoins to be believed, had no apprehension that good men were abandoned, without cause, to the malice of the powers of darkness. He thought the place more likely to be infested by robbers than by those infernal agents who are reported to molest and bewilder travellers. He had long burned with impatience to approve his valour—drawing his sabre, he marched sedately onwards, still directing his steps, as the imperfect rustling sound before him led the way. The armour he wore was a like indication to the person who avoided him. *Theodore*, now convinced that he was not mistaken, redoubled his pace, and evidently gained on the person that fled, whose haste increasing, *Theodore* came up just as a woman fell breathless before him. He hastened to raise her, but her terror was so great, that he apprehended she would faint in his arms. He used every gentle word to dispel her alarms, and assured her, that, far from injuring, he would defend her at the peril of his life. The Lady, recovering her spirits from his courteous demeanour, and gazing on her protector, said, Sure I have heard

that voice before!—Not to my knowledge, replied *Theodore*, unless, as I conjecture, thou art the Lady *Isabella*.—Merciful heaven! cried she, thou art not sent in quest of me, art thou? and saying those words, she threw herself at his feet, and besought him not to deliver her up to *Manfred*. To *Manfred*! cried *Theodore*—no, Lady; I have once already delivered thee from his tyranny, and it shall fare hard with me now, but I place thee out of the reach of his daring.—Is it possible, said she, that thou shouldst be the generous unknown whom I met last night in the vault of the castle? Sure thou art not a mortal, but my guardian angel. On my knees let me thank—Hold, gentle Princess, said *Theodore*, nor demean thyself before a poor and friendless young man. If heaven has selected me for thy deliverer, it will accomplish its work, and strengthen my arm in thy cause—but come, Lady, we are too near the mouth of the cavern; let us seek its inmost recesses: I can have no tranquillity till I have placed thee beyond the reach of danger.—Alas! what mean you, sir? said she. Though all your actions are noble, though your sentiments speak the purity of soul, is it fitting that I should accompany you alone into these perplexed retreats? should we be found together, what would a censorious world think of my conduct?—I respect your virtuous delicacy, said *Theodore*; nor do you harbour a suspicion that wounds my honour. I meant to conduct you into the most private cavity of these rocks, and then, at the hazard of my life, to guard their entrance against every living thing. Besides,

Lady, continued he, drawing a deep sigh, beauteous and all-perfect as your form is, and though my wishes are not guiltless of aspiring, know, my soul is dedicated to another; and although—a sudden noise prevented *Theodore* from proceeding. They soon distinguished these sounds, *Isabella!* what ho! *Isabella!*—the trembling Princess relapsed into her former agony of fear. *Theodore* endeavoured to encourage her, but in vain. He assured her he would die rather than suffer her to return under *Manfred's* power; and, begging her to remain concealed, he went forth to prevent the person in search of her from approaching.

At the mouth of the cavern he found an armed Knight, discoursing with a peasant, who assured him he had seen a Lady enter the passes of the rock. The Knight was preparing to seek her, when *Theodore*, placing himself in his way, with his sword drawn, sternly forbade him, at his peril, to advance. And who art thou, who darest to cross my way? said the Knight, haughtily. One who does not dare more than he will perform, said *Theodore*. I seek the Lady *Isabella*, said the Knight, and understand she has taken refuge among these rocks. Impede me not, or thou wilt repent having provoked my resentment. Thy purpose is as odious as thy resentment is contemptible, said *Theodore*. Return whence thou camest, or we shall soon know whose resentment is most terrible. The stranger, who was the principal Knight that had arrived from the Marquis of *Vicenza*, had galloped from *Manfred* as he was busied in getting

information of the Princess, and giving various orders to prevent her falling into the power of the three Knights. Their chief had suspected *Manfred* of being privy to the Princess's absconding; and this insult from a man, who, he concluded, was stationed by that Prince to secrete her, confirming his suspicions, he made no reply, but discharging a blow with his sabre at *Theodore*, would soon have removed all obstruction, if *Theodore*, who took him for one of *Manfred's* captains, and who had no sooner given the provocation than prepared to support it, had not received the stroke on his shield. The valour that had so long been smothered in his breast, broke forth at once; he rushed impetuously on the Knight, whose pride and wrath were not less powerful incentives to hardy deeds. The combat was furious, but not long: *Theodore* wounded the Knight in three several places, and at last disarmed him, as he fainted by the loss of blood. The peasant, who had fled on the first onset, had given the alarm to some of *Manfred's* domestics, who, by his orders, were dispersed through the forest, in pursuit of *Isabella*. They came up as the Knight fell, whom they soon discovered to be the noble stranger. *Theodore*, notwithstanding his hatred to *Manfred*, could not behold the victory he had gained, without emotions of pity and generosity: but he was more touched when he learned the quality of his adversary, and was informed that he was no retainer, but an enemy of *Manfred*. He assisted the servants of the latter in disarming the Knight, and in endeavouring to staunch the blood that flowed from his wounds.







*Frederic, Theodore and Isabella.*

The Knight, recovering his speech, said, in a faint and faltering voice, Generous foe, we have both been in an error: I took thee for an instrument of the tyrant; I perceive thou hast made the like mistake—it is too late for excuses—I faint—if *Isabella* is at hand—call her—I have important secrets to—He is dying! said one of the attendants; has nobody a crucifix about them? *Andrea*, do thou pray over him.—Fetch some water, said *Theodore*, and pour it down his throat, while I hasten to the Princess.—Saying this, he flew to *Isabella*, and, in few words, told her, modestly, that he had been so unfortunate, by mistake as to wound a gentleman from her father's court, who wished, ere he died, to impart something of consequence to her.—The Princess, who had been transported at hearing the voice of *Theodore*, as he called her to come forth, was astonished at what she heard. Suffering herself to be conducted by *Theodore*, the new proof of whose valour recalled her dispersed spirits, she came where the bleeding Knight lay speechless on the ground—but her fears returned, when she beheld the domestics of *Manfred*. She would again have fled, if *Theodore* had not made her observe that they were unarmed, and had not threatened them with instant death, if they should dare to seize the Princess. The stranger opening his eyes, and beholding a woman, said,—Art thou—pray, tell me truly—art thou *Isabella* of *Vicenza*?—I am, said she; Good heaven restore thee!—Then thou—then thou—said the Knight, struggling for utterance—seest—thy father—give me one—Oh! amazement!

horror! what do I hear! what do I see! cried *Isabella*. My father! you my father! how came you here, sir? for heaven's sake speak!—oh! run for help, or he will expire!—'Tis most true, said the wounded Knight, exerting all his force; I am *Frederic*, thy father—yes, I came to deliver thee—It will not be—give me a parting kiss, and take—Sir, said *Theodore*, do not exhaust yourself: suffer us to convey you to the castle. —To the castle! said *Isabella*; is there no help nearer than the castle? would you expose my father to the tyrant? if he goes thither, I dare not accompany him—and yet can I leave him! My child, said *Frederic*, it matters not for me whither I am carried: a few minutes will place me beyond danger—but while I have eyes to doat on thee, forsake me not, dear *Isabella*! This brave Knight—I know not who he is, will protect thy innocence—Sir, you will not abandon my child, will you?—*Theodore*, shedding tears over his victim, and vowing to guard the Princess at the expense of his life, persuaded *Frederic* to suffer himself to be conducted to the castle. They placed him on a horse belonging to one of the domestics, after binding up his wounds as well as they were able. *Theodore* marched by his side, and the afflicted *Isabella*, who could not bear to quit him, followed mournfully behind.

## CHAPTER IV

THE sorrowful troop no sooner arrived at the castle, than they were met by *Hippolita* and *Matilda*, whom *Isabella* had sent one of the domestics before to advertise of their approach. The Ladies, causing *Frederic* to be conveyed into the nearest chamber, retired, while the surgeons examined his wounds. *Matilda* blushed at seeing *Theodore* and *Isabella* together; but endeavoured to conceal it by embracing the latter, and condoling with her on her father's mischance. The surgeons soon came to acquaint *Hippolita* that none of the Marquis's wounds were dangerous; and that he was desirous of seeing his daughter and the Princesses. *Theodore*, under pretence of expressing his joy at being freed from his apprehensions of the combat being fatal to *Frederic*, could not resist the impulse of following *Matilda*. Her eyes were so often cast down, on meeting his, that *Isabella*, who regarded *Theodore* as attentively as he gazed on *Matilda*, soon divined who the object was that he had told her, in the cave, engaged his affections. While this mute scene passed, *Hippolita* demanded of *Frederic* the cause of his having taken that mysterious course for reclaiming his daughter; and threw in various apologies to excuse her Lord for the match contracted between their children. *Frederic*, however incensed against *Manfred*, was not insensible to the courtesy and benevolence of *Hippolita*: but he



was still more struck with the lovely form of *Matilda*. Wishing to detain them by his bed-side, he informed *Hippolita* of his story. He told her, that, while prisoner to the infidels, he had dreamed that his daughter, of whom he had learned no news since his captivity, was detained in a castle, where she was in danger of the most dreadful misfortunes: and that if he obtained his liberty, and repaired to a wood near *Joppa*, he would learn more. Alarmed at this dream, and incapable of obeying the direction given by it, his chains became more grievous than ever. But while his thoughts were occupied on the means of obtaining his liberty, he received the agreeable news, that the confederate Princes, who were warring in *Palestine*, had paid his ransom. He instantly set out for the wood that had been marked in his dream. For three days he and his attendants had wandered in the forest, without seeing a human form; but, on the evening of the third, they came to a cell, in which they found a venerable hermit in the agonies of death. Applying rich cordials, they brought the saint-like man to his speech. My sons, said he, I am bounden to your charity—but it is in vain—I am going to my eternal rest—yet I die with the satisfaction of performing the will of heaven. When first I repaired to this solitude, after seeing my country become a prey to unbelievers—it is, alas! above fifty years since I was witness to that dreadful scene!—*St. Nicholas* appeared to me, and revealed a secret, which he bade me never disclose to mortal man, but on my death-bed. This is that tremendous hour, and ye are, no doubt, the chosen



warriors to whom I was ordered to reveal my trust. As soon as ye have done the last offices to this wretched corse, dig under the seventh tree on the left hand of this poor cave, and your pains will—Oh! good heaven receive my soul! With those words, the devout man breathed his last. By break of day, continued *Frederic*, when we had committed the holy relics to earth, we dug according to direction—but what was our astonishment, when, about the depth of six feet, we discovered an enormous sabre—the very weapon yonder in the court. On the blade, which was then partly out of the scabbard, though since closed by our efforts in removing it, were written the following lines—no; excuse me, Madam, added the Marquis, turning to *Hippolita*, if I forbear to repeat them: I respect your sex and rank, and would not be guilty of offending your ear with sounds injurious to aught that is dear to you.—He paused: *Hippolita* trembled. She did not doubt but *Frederic* was destined by heaven to accomplish the fate that seemed to threaten her house. Looking with anxious fondness at *Matilda*, a silent tear stole down her cheek; but recollecting herself, she said, Proceed, my Lord; heaven does nothing in vain; mortals must receive its divine behests with lowliness and submission. It is our part to deprecate its wrath, or bow to its decrees. Repeat the sentence, my Lord, we listen resigned. *Frederic* was grieved that he had proceeded so far. The dignity and patient firmness of *Hippolita* penetrated him with respect, and the tender silent affection with which the Princess and her daughter regarded each other,

melted him almost to tears. Yet, apprehensive that his forbearance to obey would be more alarming, he repeated, in a faltering and low voice, the following lines:

*Where'er a casque that suits this sword is found,  
With perils is thy daughter compass'd round;  
Alfonso's blood alone can save the maid,  
And quiet a long restless Prince's shade.*

What is there in these lines, said *Theodore* impatiently, that affects these Princesses? why were they to be shocked by a mysterious delicacy, that has so little foundation?—Your words are rude, young man, said the Marquis; and though fortune has favoured you once—My honoured Lord, said *Isabella*, who resented *Theodore's* warmth, which she perceived was dictated by his sentiments for *Matilda*, discompose not yourself for the glosing of a peasant's son: he forgets the reverence he owes you; but he is not accustomed—*Hippolita*, concerned at the heat that had arisen, checked *Theodore* for his boldness, but with an air acknowledging his zeal; and, changing the conversation, demanded of *Frederic* where he had left her Lord? As the Marquis was going to reply, they heard a noise without, and rising to inquire the cause, *Manfred*, *Jerome*, and part of the troop, who had met an imperfect rumour of what had happened, entered the chamber. *Manfred* advanced hastily towards *Frederic's* bed, to condole with him on his misfortune, and to learn the circumstances of the combat, when, starting in an agony of terror and amazement, he cried, Ha! what art thou? thou dread-

ful spectre! is my hour come?—My dearest, gracious Lord, cried *Hippolita*, clasping him in her arms, what is it you see? why do you fix your eye-balls thus?—What! cried *Manfred*, breathless, dost thou see nothing, *Hippolita*? is this ghastly phantom sent to me alone—to me, who did not—For mercy's sweetest self, my Lord, said *Hippolita*, resume your soul, command your reason. There is none here but we, your friends.—What! is not that *Alfonso*? cried *Manfred*: Dost thou not see him? can it be my brain's delirium? This! my Lord, said *Hippolita*; this is *Theodore*, the youth who has been so unfortunate—*Theodore*! said *Manfred*, mournfully, and striking his forehead—*Theodore*, or a phantom, he has unhinged the soul of *Manfred*—but how comes he here? and how comes he in armour?—I believe he went in search of *Isabella*, said *Hippolita*. Of *Isabella*! said *Manfred*, relapsing into rage—yes, yes, that is not doubtful—but how did he escape from durance in which I left him? was it *Isabella*, or this hypocritical old Friar, that procured his enlargement?—And would a parent be criminal, my Lord, said *Theodore*, if he meditated the deliverance of his child? *Ferome*, amazed to hear himself, in a manner, accused by his son, and without foundation, knew not what to think. He could not comprehend how *Theodore* had escaped; how he came to be armed, and to encounter *Frederic*. Still he would not venture to ask any questions that might tend to inflame *Manfred's* wrath against his son. *Ferome's* silence convinced *Manfred* that he had contrived *Theodore's* release—And is it thus, thou un-

grateful old man, said the Prince, addressing himself to the Friar, that thou repayest mine and *Hippolita's* bounties? And, not content with traversing my heart's nearest wishes, thou armeſt thy baſtard, and bringeſt him into my own caſtle to inſult me!—My Lord, ſaid *Theodore*, you wrong my father: nor he nor I are capable of harbouring a thought againſt your peace. Is it inſolence thus to ſurrender myſelf to your Highneſs's pleaſure? added he, laying his ſword reſpectfully at *Manfred's* feet. Behold my boſom; ſtrike, my Lord, if you ſuſpect that a diſloyal thought is lodged there. There is not a ſentiment engraven on my heart, that does not venerate you and yours. The grace and fervour with which *Theodore* uttered theſe words, intereſted every perſon preſent in his favour.—Even *Manfred* was touched—yet ſtill poſſeſſed with his reſemblance to *Alfonſo*, his admiration was daſhed with ſecret horror. Rise, ſaid he; thy life is not my preſent purpoſe. But tell me thy hiſtory, and how thou cameſt connected with this old traitor here.—My Lord, ſaid *Ferome*, eagerly—Peace, impoſtor, ſaid *Manfred*; I will not have him prompted.—My Lord, ſaid *Theodore*, I want no aſſiſtance. My ſtory is very brief. I was carried, at five years of age, to *Algiers*, with my mother, who had been taken by corſairs from the coaſt of *Sicily*. She died of grief in leſs than a twelvemonth. The tears guſhed from *Ferome's* eyes, on whoſe countenance a thouſand anxious paſſions ſtood expreſſed. Before ſhe died, continued *Theodore*, ſhe bound a writing about my arm under my garments,

which told me I was the son of the Count *Falconara*.—It is most true, said *Jerome*; I am that wretched father.—Again I enjoin thee silence, said *Manfred*; proceed.—I remained in slavery, said *Theodore*, until within these two years, when attending on my master in his cruises, I was delivered by a Christian vessel, which overpowered the pirate; and discovering myself to the captain, he generously put me on shore in *Sicily*—but alas! instead of finding a father, I learned that his estate, which was situated on the coast, had, during his absence, been laid waste by the Rover, who had carried my mother and me into captivity; that his castle had been burnt to the ground, and that my father, on his return, had sold what remained, and was retired into religion in the kingdom of *Naples*, but where no man could inform me. Destitute and friendless, hopeless almost of attaining the transport of a parent's embrace, I took the first opportunity of setting sail for *Naples*, from whence, within these six days, I wandered into this, province, still supporting myself by the labour of my hands; nor until yester-morn did I believe that heaven had reserved any lot for me but peace of mind and contented poverty. This, my Lord, is *Theodore's* story. I am blessed, beyond my hope, in finding a father: I am unfortunate, beyond my desert, in having incurred your Highness's displeasure. He ceased. A murmur of approbation gently arose from the audience. This is not all, said *Frederic*: I am bound in honour to add what he suppresses. Though he is modest, I must be generous—he is one of the bravest



youths on Christian ground. He is warm too; and, from the short knowledge I have of him, I will pledge myself for his veracity: if what he reports of himself were not true, he would not utter it—and for me, youth, I honour a frankness which becomes thy birth. But now, and thou didst offend me: yet the noble blood, which flows in thy veins, may well be allowed to boil out, when it has so recently traced itself to its source. Come, my Lord, turning to *Manfred*, if I can pardon him, surely you may. It is not the youth's fault, if you took him for a spectre. This bitter taunt galled the soul of *Manfred*. If beings from another world, replied he, haughtily, have power to impress my mind with awe, it is more than living man can do; nor could a stripling's arm—My Lord, interrupted *Hippolita*, your guest has occasion for repose: shall we not leave him to rest? Saying this, and taking *Manfred* by the hand, she took leave of *Frederic*, and led the company forth. The Prince, not sorry to quit a conversation, which recalled to mind the discovery he had made of his most secret sensations, suffered himself to be conducted to his own apartment, after permitting *Theodore*, though under engagement to return to the castle on the morrow—a condition the young man gladly accepted—to retire with his father to the convent. *Matilda* and *Isabella* were too much occupied with their own reflections, and too little content with each other, to wish for farther converse that night. They separated each to her chamber, with more expressions of ceremony, and fewer of affection, than had passed between them since their childhood.

If they parted with small cordiality, they did but meet with greater impatience as soon as the sun was risen. Their minds were in a situation that excluded sleep, and each recollected a thousand questions which she wished she had put to the other overnight. *Matilda* reflected that *Isabella* had been twice delivered by *Theodore* in very critical situations, which she could not believe accidental. His eyes, it was true, had been fixed on her in *Frederic's* chamber; but that might have been to disguise his passion for *Isabella* from the fathers of both. It were better to clear this up. She wished to know the truth, lest she should wrong her friend, by entertaining a passion for *Isabella's* lover. Thus jealousy prompted, and, at the same time, borrowed an excuse from friendship to justify its curiosity.

*Isabella*, not less restless, had better foundation for her suspicions. Both *Theodore's* tongue and eyes had told her his heart was engaged—it was true—yet, perhaps, *Matilda* might not correspond to his passion—she had ever appeared insensible to love: all her thoughts were set on heaven.—Why did I dissuade her? said *Isabella* to herself: I am punished for my generosity—but when did they meet? where? It cannot be: I have deceived myself—perhaps last night was the first time they ever beheld each other; it must be some other object that has prepossessed his affections; if it is, I am not so unhappy as I thought; if it is not my friend *Matilda*—how! can I stoop to wish for the affection of a man, who rudely and unnecessarily acquainted me with his indiffer-

ence! and that, at the very moment in which common courtesy demanded at least expressions of civility, I will go to my dear *Matilda*, who will confirm me in this becoming pride—man is false—I will advise with her on taking the veil: she will rejoice to find me in this disposition; and I will acquaint her that I no longer oppose her inclination for the cloister. In this frame of mind, and determined to open her hear. entirely to *Matilda*, she went to that Princess's chamber, whom she found already dressed, and leaning pensively on her arm. This attitude, so correspondent to what she felt herself, revived *Isabella's* suspicions, and destroyed the confidence she had purposed to place in her friend. They blushed at meeting, and were too much novices to disguise their sensations with address. After some unmeaning questions and replies, *Matilda* demanded of *Isabella* the cause of her flight? The latter, who had almost forgotten *Manfred's* passion, so entirely was she occupied by her own, concluding that *Matilda* referred to her last escape from the convent, which had occasioned the events of the preceding evening, replied, *Martelli* brought word to the convent that your mother was dead. Oh! said *Matilda*, interrupting her, *Bianca* has explained that mistake to me: on seeing me faint, she cried out, The Princess is dead! and *Martelli*, who had come for the usual dole to the castle—And what made you faint? said *Isabella*, indifferent to the rest.—*Matilda* blushed, and stammered—My father—he was sitting in judgment on a criminal.—What criminal? said *Isabella*, eagerly. A young man, said

*Matilda*; I believe—I think it was that young man that—What, *Theodore*? said *Isabella*. Yes! answered she; I never saw him before; I do not know how he had offended my father—but as he has been of service to you, I am glad my Lord has pardoned him.—Served me? replied *Isabella*, do you term it serving me, to wound my father, and almost occasion his death? Though it is but since yesterday that I am blessed with knowing a parent, I hope *Matilda* does not think I am such a stranger to filial tenderness as not to resent the boldness of that audacious youth, and that it is impossible for me ever to feel any affection for one who dared to lift his arm against the author of my being. No, *Matilda*, my heart abhors him; and if you still retain the friendship for me that you have vowed from your infancy, you will detest a man who has been on the point of making me miserable for ever. *Matilda* held down her head, and replied; I hope my dearest *Isabella* does not doubt her *Matilda's* friendship: I never beheld that youth until yesterday; he is almost a stranger to me: But as the surgeons have pronounced your father out of danger, you ought not to harbour uncharitable resentment against one, who, I am persuaded, did not know the Marquis was related to you. You plead his cause very pathetically, said *Isabella*, considering he is so much a stranger to you! I am mistaken, or he returns your charity.—What mean you? said *Matilda*. Nothing, said *Isabella*: repenting that she had given *Matilda* a hint of *Theodore's* inclination for her. Then, changing the discourse, she asked

*Matilda* what occasioned *Manfred* to take *Theodore* for a spectre? Bless me, said *Matilda*, did not you observe his extreme resemblance to the portrait of *Alfonso* in the gallery? I took notice of it to *Bianca* even before I saw him in armour; but with the helmet on, he is the very image of that picture. I do not much observe pictures, said *Isabella*; much less have I examined this young man so attentively as you seem to have done—ah! *Matilda*, your heart is in danger—but let me warn you as a friend—he has owned to me that he is in love; it cannot be with you, for yesterday was the first time you ever met—was it not? Certainly, replied *Matilda*; but why does my dearest *Isabella* conclude from anything I have said, that—she paused—then continuing; he saw you first, and I am far from having the vanity to think that my little portion of charms could engage a heart devoted to you—may you be happy, *Isabella*, whatever is the fate of *Matilda*!—My lovely friend, said *Isabella*, whose heart was too honest to resist a kind expression, it is you that *Theodore* admires; I saw it; I am persuaded of it; nor shall a thought of my own happiness suffer me to interfere with yours. This frankness drew tears from the gentle *Matilda*; and jealousy, that, for a moment, had raised a coolness between these amiable maidens, soon gave way to the natural sincerity and candour of their souls. Each confessed to the other the impression that *Theodore* had made on her; and this confidence was followed by a struggle of generosity, each insisting on yielding her claim to her friend. At length, the dignity of



*Isabella's* virtue reminding her of the preference which *Theodore* had almost declared for her rival, made her determine to conquer her passion, and cede the beloved object to her friend.

During this contest of amity, *Hippolita* entered her daughter's chamber. Madam, said she to *Isabella*, you have so much tenderness for *Matilda*, and interest yourself so kindly in whatever affects our wretched house, that I can have no secrets with my child which are not proper for you to hear. The Princesses were all attention and anxiety. Know then, madam, continued *Hippolita*, and you, my dearest *Matilda*, that, being convinced, by all the events of these two last ominous days, that heaven purposes the sceptre of *Otranto* should pass from *Manfred's* hands into those of the Marquis *Frederic*, I have been, perhaps, inspired with the thought of averting our total destruction by the union of our rival houses. With this view I have been proposing to *Manfred*, my Lord, to tender this dear, dear child, to *Frederic*, your father?—Me to Lord *Frederic*! cried *Matilda*—good heavens! my gracious mother—and have you named it to my father?—I have, said *Hippolita*; he listened benignly to my proposal, and is gone to break it to the Marquis.—Ah! wretched Princess! cried *Isabella*; what hast thou done! what ruin has thy inadvertent goodness been preparing for thyself, for me, and for *Matilda*!—Ruin from me to you and to my child! said *Hippolita*, what can this mean?—Alas! said *Isabella*, the purity of your own heart prevents your seeing the depravity of others. *Manfred*, your Lord,

that impious man—Hold, said *Hippolita*; you must not, in my presence, young Lady, mention *Manfred* with disrespect; he is my Lord and husband, and—Will not long be so, said *Isabella*, if his wicked purposes can be carried into execution.—This language amazes me! said *Hippolita*. Your feeling, *Isabella*, is warm; but, until this hour, I never knew it betray you into intemperance. What deed of *Manfred* authorises you to treat him as a murderer, an assassin?—Thou virtuous, and too credulous Princess! replied *Isabella*; it is not thy life he aims at—it is to separate himself from thee! to divorce thee! to—to divorce me!—to divorce my mother! cried *Hippolita* and *Matilda* at once. Yes, said *Isabella*; and to complete his crime he meditates—I cannot speak it!—What can surpass what thou hast already uttered! said *Matilda*. *Hippolita* was silent. Grief choked her speech; and the recollection of *Manfred's* late ambiguous discourses confirmed what she heard. Excellent, dear Lady! Madam! Mother! cried *Isabella*, flinging herself at *Hippolita's* feet in a transport of passion; trust me, believe me, I will die a thousand deaths sooner than consent to injure you, than yield to so odious—oh!—This is too much! cried *Hippolita*: What crime does one crime suggest! Rise, dear *Isabella*; I do not doubt your virtue. Oh! *Matilda*, this stroke is too heavy for thee! weep not, my child! and not a murmur, I charge thee. Remember, he is *thy* father still!—But you are my mother too, said *Matilda*, fervently; and you are virtuous, you are guiltless!—Oh! must not I, must

not I complain?—You must not, said *Hippolita*; come, all will yet be well. *Manfred*, in the agony for the loss of thy brother, knew not what he said: perhaps *Isabella* misunderstood him: his heart is good—and, my child, thou knowest not all! There is a destiny hangs over us; the hand of Providence is stretched out—Oh! could I but save thee from the wreck!—Yes, continued she, in a firmer tone; perhaps the sacrifice of myself may atone for all—I will go and offer myself to this divorce—it boots not what becomes of me. I will withdraw into the neighbouring monastery, and waste the remainder of life in prayers and tears for my child and—the Prince!—Thou art as much too good for this world, said *Isabella*, as *Manfred* is execrable—but think not, Lady, that thy weakness shall determine for me. I swear, hear me all ye angels—Stop, I adjure thee, cried *Hippolita*; remember thou dost not depend on thyself; thou hast a father,—My father is too pious, too noble, interrupted *Isabella*, to command an impious deed. But should he command it; can a father enjoin a cursed act? I was contracted to the son, can I wed the father?—No, Madam, no; force should not drag me to *Manfred's* hated bed. I loathe him, I abhor him: divine and human laws forbid—and my friend, my dearest *Matilda*! would I wound her tender soul by injuring her adored mother? my own mother—I never have known another.—Oh! she is the mother of both! cried *Matilda*: Can we, can we, *Isabella*, adore her too much?—My lovely children, said the touched *Hippolita*, your tenderness over-

powers me—but I must not give way to it. It is not ours to make election for ourselves: heaven, our fathers, and our husbands, must decide for us. Have patience until you hear what *Manfred* and *Frederic* have determined. If the Marquis accepts *Matilda's* hand, I know she will readily obey. Heaven may interpose and prevent the rest.—What means my child? continued she, seeing *Matilda* fall at her feet with a flood of speechless tears—But no; answer me not, my daughter: I must not hear a word against the pleasure of thy father.—Oh! doubt not my obedience, my dreadful obedience to him and to you! said *Matilda*. But can I, most respected of women, can I experience all this tenderness, this world of goodness, and conceal a thought from the best of mothers?—What art thou going to utter? said *Isabella*, trembling. Recollect thyself, *Matilda*.—No, *Isabella*, said the Princess, I should not deserve this incomparable parent, if the inmost recesses of my soul harboured a thought without her permission—nay, I have offended her; I have suffered a passion to enter my heart without her avowal—but here I disclaim it; here I vow to heaven and her—My child! my child! said *Hippolita*, what words are these! what new calamities has fate in store for us! Thou, a passion! Thou, in this hour of destruction!—Oh! I see all my guilt! said *Matilda*.—I abhor myself, if I cost my mother a pang. She is the dearest thing I have on earth—Oh! I will never, never behold him more!—*Isabella*! said *Hippolita*, thou art conscious to this unhappy secret; whatever it is, speak!—What!

cried *Matilda*, have I so forfeited my mother's love, that she will not permit me even to speak my own guilt? oh! wretched, wretched *Matilda*!—Thou art too cruel, said *Isabella* to *Hippolita*: canst thou behold this anguish of a virtuous mind, and not commiserate it?—Not pity my child!—said *Hippolita*, catching *Matilda* in her arms—Oh! I know she is good, she is all virtue, all tenderness, and duty; I do forgive thee, my excellent, my only hope! The Princesses then revealed to *Hippolita* their mutual inclination for *Theodore*, and the purpose of *Isabella* to resign him to *Matilda*.—*Hippolita* blamed their imprudence, and shewed them the improbability that either father would consent to bestow his heiress on so poor a man, though nobly born. Some comfort it gave her to find their passion of so recent a date, and that *Theodore* had but little cause to suspect it in either. She strictly enjoined them to avoid all correspondence with him. This *Matilda* fervently promised; but *Isabella*, who flattered herself that she meant no more than to promote his union with her friend, could not determine to avoid him; and made no reply. I will go to the convent, said *Hippolita*, and order new masses to be said for a deliverance from these calamities.—Oh! my mother, said *Matilda*, you mean to quit us: you mean to take sanctuary, and to give my father an opportunity of pursuing his fatal intention. Alas! on my knees I supplicate you to forbear—will you leave me a prey to *Frederic*? I will follow you to the convent.—Be at peace, my child, said *Hippolita*; I will return instantly.—I will never



abandon thee, until I know it is the will of heaven, and for thy benefit.—Do not deceive me, said *Matilda*. I will not marry *Frederic* until thou commandest it.—Alas! what will become of me?—Why that exclamation? said *Hippolita*.—I have promised thee to return.—Ah! my mother, replied *Matilda*, stay and save me from myself. A frown from thee can do more than all my father's severity. I have given away my heart, and you alone can make me recal it.—No more, said *Hippolita*; thou must not relapse, *Matilda*.—I can quit *Theodore*, said she, but must I wed another? let me attend thee to the altar, and shut myself from the world for ever.—Thy fate depends on thy father, said *Hippolita*; I have ill bestowed my tenderness, if it has taught thee to revere aught beyond him. Adieu! my child: I go to pray for thee.

*Hippolita's* real purpose was to demand of *Jerome*, whether in conscience she might not consent to the divorce. She had oft urged *Manfred* to resign the principality, which the delicacy of her conscience rendered an hourly burden to her. These scruples concurred to make the separation from her husband appear less dreadful to her, than it would have seemed in any other situation.

*Jerome*, at quitting the castle overnight, had questioned *Theodore* severely why he had accused him to *Manfred* of being privy to his escape. *Theodore* owned it had been with the design to prevent *Manfred's* suspicion from alighting on *Matilda*; and added, the holiness of *Jerome's* life and character secured him from the tyrant's wrath. *Jerome* was

heartily grieved to discover his son's inclination for that Princess; and leaving him to his rest, promised in the morning to acquaint him with important reasons for conquering his passion. *Theodore*, like *Isabella*, was too recently acquainted with parental authority, to submit to its decisions against the impulse of his heart. He had little curiosity to learn the Friar's reasons, and less disposition to obey them. The lovely *Matilda* had made stronger impressions on him than filial affection. All night he pleased himself with visions of love; and it was not till late after the morning-office, that he recollected the Friar's commands to attend him at *Alfonso's* tomb.

Young man, said *Jerome*, when he saw him, this tardiness does not please me. Have a father's commands already so little weight? *Theodore* made awkward excuses, and attributed his delay to having overslept himself. And on whom were thy dreams employed? said the Friar, sternly. His son blushed. —Come, come, resumed the Friar, inconsiderate youth, this must not be; Eradicate this guilty passion from thy breast.—Guilty passion! cried *Theodore*, Can guilt dwell with innocent beauty and virtuous modesty?—It is sinful, replied the Friar, to cherish those whom heaven has doomed to destruction. A tyrant's race must be swept from the earth to the third and fourth generation.—Will heaven visit the innocent for the crimes of the guilty? said *Theodore*. The fair *Matilda* has virtues enough—to undo thee, interrupted *Jerome*. Hast thou so soon forgotten that twice the savage *Manfred* has pronounced thy

sentence?—Nor have I forgotten, sir, said *Theodore*, that the charity of his daughter delivered me from his power. I can forget injuries, but never benefits.—The injuries thou hast received from *Manfred's* race, said the Friar, are beyond what thou canst conceive. Reply not, but view this holy image! Beneath this marble monument rest the ashes of the good *Alfonso*; a Prince adorned with every virtue! the father of his people! the delight of mankind! kneel, headstrong boy, and list, while a father unfolds a tale of horror, that will expel every sentiment from thy soul, but sensations of sacred vengeance.—*Alfonso*! much-injured Prince! let thy unsatisfied shade sit awful on the troubled air, while these trembling lips—Ha! who comes there?—The most wretched of women! said *Hippolita*, entering the choir. Good Father, art thou at leisure?—but why this kneeling youth? what means the horror imprinted on each countenance? why at this venerable tomb—alas! hast thou seen aught?—We were pouring forth our orisons to heaven, replied the Friar, with some confusion, to put an end to the woes of this deplorable province. Join with us, Lady! thy spotless soul may obtain an exemption from the judgments which the portents of these days but too speakingly denounce against thy house.—I pray fervently to heaven to divert them, said the pious Princess. Thou knowest it has been the occupation of my life to wrest a blessing for my Lord and my harmless children—One, alas! is taken from me! would heaven but hear me for my poor *Matilda*! Father! intercede for her!—Every





*Jerome and Hippolyta.*



heart will bless her, cried *Theodore*, with rapture. Be dumb, rash youth! said *Jerome*. And thou, fond Princess, contend not with the Powers above! the Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away: bless his holy name, and submit to his decrees.—I do most devoutly, said *Hippolita*: but will he not spare my only comfort? must *Matilda* perish too? Ah! father, I came—but dismiss thy son. No ear but thine must hear what I have to utter.—May heaven grant thy every wish, most excellent Princess! said *Theodore*, retiring. *Jerome* frowned.

*Hippolita* then acquainted the Friar with the proposal she had suggested to *Manfred*, his approbation of it, and the tender of *Matilda* that he was gone to make to *Frederic*. *Jerome* could not conceal his dislike of the motion, which he covered under the pretence of the improbability that *Frederic*, the nearest of blood to *Alfonso*, and who was come to claim his succession, would yield to an alliance with the usurper of his right. But nothing could equal the perplexity of the Friar, when *Hippolita* confessed her readiness not to oppose the separation, and demanded his opinion on the legality of her acquiescence. The Friar caught eagerly at her request of his advice, and, without explaining his aversion to the proposed marriage of *Manfred* and *Isabella*, he painted to *Hippolita*, in the most alarming colours, the sinfulness of her consent, denounced judgments against her if she complied, and enjoined her, in the severest terms, to treat any such proposition with every mark of indignation and refusal.

*Manfred*, in the mean time, had broken his purpose to *Frederic*, and proposed the double marriage. That weak Prince, who had been struck with the charms of *Matilda*, listened but too eagerly to the offer. He forgot his enmity to *Manfred*, whom he saw but little hope of dispossessing by force; and flattering himself that no issue might succeed from the union of his daughter with the Tyrant, he looked upon his own succession to the principality as facilitated by wedding *Matilda*. He made faint opposition to the proposal; affecting, for form only, not to acquiesce unless *Hippolita* should consent to the divorce.—*Manfred* took that upon himself. Transported with his success, and impatient to see himself in a situation to expect sons, he hastened to his wife's apartment, determined to extort her compliance. He learned with indignation that she was absent at the convent. His guilt suggested to him that she had probably been informed by *Isabella* of his purpose. He doubted whether her retirement to the convent did not import an intention of remaining there, until she could raise obstacles to their divorce; and the suspicions he had already entertained of *Jerome*, made him apprehend that the Friar would not only traverse his views, but might have inspired *Hippolita* with the resolution of taking sanctuary. Impatient to unravel this clue, and to defeat its success, *Manfred* hastened to the convent, and arrived there as the Friar was earnestly exhorting the Princess never to yield to the divorce.

Madam, said *Manfred*, what business drew you

hither? why did you not await my return from the Marquis?—I came to implore a blessing on your councils, replied *Hippolita*. My councils do not need a Friar's intervention: said *Manfred*—and of all men living is that hoary traitor the only one whom you delight to confer with?—Profane Prince! said *Jerome*; is it at the altar that thou choosest to insult the servants of the altar?—but, *Manfred*, thy impious schemes are known. Heaven and this virtuous lady know them—nay, frown not, Prince. The church despises thy menaces. Her thunders will be heard above thy wrath. Dare to proceed in thy curst purpose of a divorce, until her sentence be known, and here I lance her Anathema at thy head.—Audacious rebel! said *Manfred*, endeavouring to conceal the awe with which the Friar's words inspired him; dost thou presume to threaten thy lawful Prince?—Thou art no lawful Prince, said *Jerome*; thou art no Prince—go, discuss thy claim with *Frederic*: and when that is done—It is done, replied *Manfred*; *Frederic* accepts *Matilda's* hand, and is content to wave his claim, unless I have no male issue—as he spoke those words, three drops of blood fell from the nose of *Alfonso's* statue. *Manfred* turned pale, and the Princess sunk on her knees. Behold! said the Friar; mark this miraculous indication that the blood of *Alfonso* will never mix with that of *Manfred*!—My gracious lord, said *Hippolita*, let us submit ourselves to heaven.—Think not thy ever obedient wife rebels against thy authority. I have no will but that of my Lord and the church. To that reverend tribunal let us appeal.

It does not depend on us to burst the bonds that unite us. If the church shall approve the dissolution of our marriage, be it so—I have but few years, and those of sorrow, to pass. Where can they be worn away so well as at the foot of this altar, in prayers for thine and *Matilda's* safety?—But thou shalt not remain here until then, said *Manfred*. Repair with me to the castle, and there I will advise on the proper measures for a divorce; but this meddling Friar comes not thither: my hospitable roof shall never more harbour a traitor—and for thy Reverence's offspring, continued he, I banish him from my dominions. He, I ween, is no sacred personage, nor under the protection of the church. Whoever weds *Isabella*, it shall not be Father *Falconara's* started up son.—They start up, said the Friar, who are suddenly beheld in the seat of lawful Princes; but they wither away like the grass, and their place knows them no more. *Manfred*, casting a look of scorn at the Friar, led *Hippolita* forth; but, at the door of the church, whispered one of his attendants to remain concealed about the convent, and bring him instant notice, if any one from the castle should repair thither.

## CHAPTER V

EVERY reflection which *Manfred* made on the Friar's behaviour, conspired to persuade him that *Jerome* was privy to an amour between *Isabella* and *Theodore*. But *Jerome's* new presumption, so dissonant from his former meekness, suggested still deeper apprehensions. The Prince even suspected that the Friar depended on some secret support from *Frederic*, whose arrival coinciding with the novel appearance of *Theodore*, seemed to bespeak a correspondence. Still more was he troubled with the resemblance of *Theodore* to *Alfonso's* portrait. The latter he knew had unquestionably died without issue. *Frederic* had consented to bestow *Isabella* on him.—These contradictions agitated his mind with numberless pangs. He saw but two methods of extricating himself from his difficulties. The one was to resign his dominions to the Marquis—Pride, ambition, and his reliance on ancient prophecies, which had pointed out a possibility of preserving them to his posterity, combated that thought. The other was to press his marriage with *Isabella*. After long ruminating on these anxious thoughts, as he marched silently with *Hippolita* to the castle, he at last discoursed with that Princess on the subject of his disquiet, and used every insinuating and plausible argument to extract her consent to, even her promise of promoting the divorce. *Hippolita* needed little persuasion to bend



her to his pleasure. She endeavoured to win him over to the measure of resigning his dominions; but, finding her exhortations fruitless, she assured him, that, as far as her conscience would allow, she would raise no opposition to a separation, though, without better-founded scruples than what he yet alleged, she would not engage to be active in demanding it.

This compliance, though inadequate, was sufficient to raise *Manfred's* hopes. He trusted that his power and wealth would easily advance his suit at the court of *Rome*, whither he resolved to engage *Frederic* to take a journey on purpose. That Prince had discovered so much passion for *Matilda*, that *Manfred* hoped to obtain all he wished, by holding out or withdrawing his daughter's charms, according as the Marquis should appear more or less disposed to co-operate in his views. Even the absence of *Frederic* would be a material point gained, until he could take farther measures for his security.

Dismissing *Hippolita* to her apartment, he repaired to that of the Marquis, but crossing the great hall, through which he was to pass, he met *Bianca*. That damsel he knew was in the confidence of both the young Ladies. It immediately occurred to him to sift her on the subject of *Isabella* and *Theodore*. Calling her aside into the recess of the oriel window of the hall, and soothing her with many fair words and promises, he demanded of her, whether she knew aught of the state of *Isabella's* affections. I! my Lord! no, my Lord—yes, my Lord—poor Lady! she is wonderfully alarmed about her father's wounds;

but I tell her he will do well, don't your Highness think so?—I do not ask you, replied *Manfred*, what she thinks about her father: but you are in her secrets: come, be a good girl, and tell me; is there any young man—ha! you understand me.—Lord bless me! understand your Highness? no, not I: I told her a few vulnerary herbs and repose.—I am not talking, replied the Prince, impatiently, about her father: I know he will do well.—Bless me, I rejoice to hear your Highness say so; for though I thought it right not to let my young Lady despond, methought his Greatness had a wan look, and a something—I remember when young *Ferdinand* was wounded by the *Venetian*—Thou answerest from the point, interrupted *Manfred*; but here, take this jewel; perhaps that may fix thy attention—nay, no reverences; my favour shall not stop here—come, tell me truly; how stands *Isabella's* heart?—Well! your Highness has such a way! said *Bianca*, to be sure—but can your Highness keep a secret?—if it should ever come out of your lips—It shall not, it shall not, cried *Manfred*. Nay, but swear, your Highness:—by my halidame, if it should ever be known that I said it!—Why, truth is truth, I do not think my Lady *Isabella* ever much affectioned my young Lord, your Son—yet he was a sweet youth as one should see—I am sure, if I had been a Princess—but bless me! I must attend my Lady *Matilda*; she will marvel what is become of me.—Stay, cried *Manfred*; thou hast not satisfied my question. Hast thou ever carried any message, any letter?—I! good gracious! cried *Bianca*; I carry

a letter? I would not, to be a Queen. I hope your Highness thinks, though I am poor, I am honest;—did your Highness never hear what Count *Marsigli* offered me, when he came wooing to my Lady *Matilda*?—I have not leisure, said *Manfred*, to listen to thy tales. I do not question thy honesty; but it is thy duty to conceal nothing from me. How long has *Isabella* been acquainted with *Theodore*?—Nay, there is nothing can escape your Highness! said *Bianca*—not that I know anything of the matter—*Theodore*, to be sure, is a proper young man, and, as my Lady *Matilda* says, the very image of good *Alfonso*: has not your Highness remarked it?—Yes, yes,—No—thou torturest me, said *Manfred*. Where did they meet?—when?—Who! my Lady *Matilda*? said *Bianca*. No, no, not *Matilda*; *Isabella*: When did *Isabella* first become acquainted with this *Theodore*?—*Virgin Mary*! said *Bianca*, how should I know?—Thou dost know, said *Manfred*, and I must know; I will.—Lord! your Highness is not jealous of young *Theodore*! said *Bianca*. Jealous! no, no: why should I be jealous?—perhaps I mean to unite them. If I were sure *Isabella* would have no repugnance—Repugnance! no, I'll warrant her, said *Bianca*: he is as comely a youth as ever trod on Christian ground. We are all in love with him; there is not a soul in the castle but would be rejoiced to have him for our Prince—I mean, when it shall please heaven to call your Highness to itself.—Indeed! said *Manfred*; has it gone so far! oh! this cursed Friar!—but I must not lose time:—go,

*Bianca*, attend *Isabella*; but, I charge thee, not a word of what has passed. Find out how she is affected towards *Theodore*: bring me good news, and that ring has a companion. Wait at the foot of the winding staircase: I am going to visit the Marquis, and will talk farther with thee at my return.

*Manfred*, after some general conversation, desired *Frederic* to dismiss the two Knights, his companions, having to talk with him on urgent affairs. As soon as they were alone, he began, in artful guise, to sound the Marquis on the subject of *Matilda*; and, finding him disposed to his wish, he let drop hints on the difficulties that would attend the celebration of their marriage, unless—at that instant *Bianca* burst into the room, with a wildness in her look and gestures that spoke the utmost terror. Oh! my Lord, my Lord! cried she, we are all undone! it is come again! it is come again!—What is come again? cried *Manfred*, amazed. Oh! the hand! the Giant! the hand!—support me! I am terrified out of my senses, cried *Bianca*. I will not sleep in the castle to-night. Where shall I go?—my things may come after me to-morrow—would I had been content to wed *Francisco*!—this comes of ambition!—What has terrified thee thus, young woman? said the Marquis; thou art safe here; be not alarmed.—Oh! your Greatness is wonderfully good, said *Bianca*, but I dare not—no, pray let me go—I had rather leave everything behind me, than stay another hour under this roof.—Go to—thou hast lost thy senses, said *Manfred*. Interrupt us not; we were communing on important matters.

My Lord, this wench is subject to fits. Come with me, *Bianca*.—Oh! the Saints! no, said *Bianca*; for certain it comes to warn your Highness: why should it appear to me else? I say my prayers morning and evening—oh! if your Highness had believed *Diego*! 'tis the same hand that he saw the foot to in the gallery-chamber—Father *Jerome* has often told us the prophecy would be out one of these days. *Bianca*, said he, mark my words—Thou rave'st, said *Manfred*, in a rage; be gone, and keep these fooleries to frighten thy companions.—What! my Lord! cried *Bianca*, do you think I have seen nothing? go to the foot of the great stairs yourself—as I live, I saw it.—Saw what? tell us, fair maid, what thou hast seen, said *Frederic*. Can your Highness listen, said *Manfred*, to the delirium of a silly wench, who has heard stories of apparitions until she believes them?—This is more than fancy, said the Marquis; her terror is too natural, and too strongly impressed, to be the work of imagination. Tell us, fair maiden, what it is has moved thee thus.—Yes, my Lord; thank your Greatness, said *Bianca*; I believe I look very pale; I shall be better when I have recovered myself. I was going to my Lady *Isabella's* chamber, by his Highness's order.—We do not want the circumstances, interrupted *Manfred*: since his Highness will have it so, proceed; but be brief.—Lord! your Highness thwarts one so! replied *Bianca*: I fear my hair—I am sure I never in my life—well! as I was telling your Greatness, I was going, by his Highness's order, to my Lady *Isabella's* chamber: she lies in the watchet-



coloured chamber, on the right hand, one pair of stairs: so when I came to the great stairs, I was looking on his Highness's present here—Grant me patience, said *Manfred*: will this wench never come to the point? what imports it to the Marquis, that I gave thee a bawble for thy faithful attendance on my daughter? we want to know what thou sawest.—I was going to tell your Highness, said *Bianca*, if you would permit me.—So as I was rubbing the ring—I am sure I had not gone up three steps, but I heard the rattling of armour; for all the world such a clatter, as *Diego* says he heard when the Giant turned him about in the gallery-chamber.—What does she mean, my Lord! said the Marquis: is your castle haunted by giants and goblins? Lord! what, has not your Greatness heard the story of the Giant in the gallery-chamber? cried *Bianca*. I marvel his Highness has not told you—mayhap you do not know there is a prophecy—This trifling is intolerable, interrupted *Manfred*. Let us dismiss this silly wench, my Lord! we have more important affairs to discuss.—By your favour, said *Frederic*, these are no trifles: the enormous sabre I was directed to in the wood, yon casque, its fellow—are these visions of this poor maiden's brain?—So *Jaquez* thinks, may it please your Greatness: Said *Bianca*. He says this moon will not be out without our seeing some strange revolution. For my part I should not be surprized if it was to happen to-morrow; for, as I was saying, when I heard the clattering of armour, I was all in a cold sweat—I looked up, and if your Greatness will believe

me, I saw upon the uppermost banister of the great stairs a hand in armour as big, as big—I thought I should have swooned—I never stopped until I came hither—would I were well out of this castle! My Lady *Matilda* told me but yester-morning that her Highness *Hippolita* knows something—Thou art an insolent! cried *Manfred*.—Lord Marquis, it much misgives me that this scene is concerted to affront me. Are my own domestics suborned to spread tales injurious to my honour? Pursue your claim by manly daring; or let us bury our feuds, as was proposed, by the intermarriage of our children: but trust me, it ill becomes a Prince of your bearing to practise on mercenary wenches.—I scorn your imputation, said *Frederic*, until this hour I never set eyes on this damsel: I have given her no jewel! my Lord, my Lord, your conscience, your guilt accuses you, and you would throw the suspicion on me—but keep your daughter, and think no more of *Isabella*: The judgments already fallen on your house forbid me matching into it.

*Manfred*, alarmed at the resolute tone in which *Frederic* delivered these words, endeavoured to pacify him. Dismissing *Bianca*, he made such submissions to the Marquis, and threw in such artful encomiums on *Matilda*, that *Frederic* was once more staggered. However, as his passion was of so recent a date, it could not, at once, surmount the scruples he had conceived. He had gathered enough from *Bianca's* discourse to persuade him that Heaven declared itself against *Manfred*. The proposed marriages too

removed his claim to a distance; and the principality of *Otranto* was a stronger temptation, than the contingent reversion of it with *Matilda*. Still he would not absolutely recede from his engagements; but purposing to gain time, he demanded of *Manfred* if it was true in fact that *Hippolita* consented to the divorce. The Prince, transported to find no other obstacle, and depending on his influence over his wife, assured the Marquis it was so, and that he might satisfy himself of the truth from her own mouth.

As they were thus discoursing, word was brought that the banquet was prepared. *Manfred* conducted *Frederic* to the great hall, where they were received by *Hippolita* and the young Princesses. *Manfred* placed the Marquis next to *Matilda*, and seated himself between his wife and *Isabella*. *Hippolita* comported herself with an easy gravity; but the young Ladies were silent and melancholy. *Manfred*, who was determined to pursue his point with the Marquis in the remainder of the evening, pushed on the feast until it waxed late; affecting unrestrained gaiety, and plying *Frederic* with repeated goblets of wine. The latter, more upon his guard than *Manfred* wished, declined his frequent challenges, on pretence of his late loss of blood; while the Prince, to raise his own disordered spirits, and to counterfeit unconcern, indulged himself in plentiful draughts, though not to the intoxication of his senses.

The evening being far advanced, the banquet concluded. *Manfred* would have withdrawn with

*Frederic*; but the latter pleading weakness, and want of repose, retired to his chamber, gallantly telling the Prince, that his daughter should amuse his Highness until himself could attend him. *Manfred* accepted the party, and, to the no small grief of *Isabella*, accompanied her to her apartment. *Matilda* waited on her mother to enjoy the freshness of the evening on the ramparts of the castle.

Soon as the company were dispersed their several ways, *Frederic*, quitting his chamber, inquired if *Hippolita* was alone, and was told by one of her attendants, who had not noticed her going forth, that, at that hour, she generally withdrew to her oratory, where he probably would find her. The Marquis, during the repast, had beheld *Matilda* with increase of passion. He now wished to find *Hippolita* in the disposition her Lord had promised. The portents that had alarmed him were forgotten in his desires. Stealing softly and unobserved to the apartment of *Hippolita*, he entered it with a resolution to encourage her acquiescence to the divorce, having perceived that *Manfred* was resolved to make the possession of *Isabella* an unalterable condition, before he would grant *Matilda* to his wishes.

The Marquis was not surprized at the silence that reigned in the Princess's apartment. Concluding her, as he had been advertized, in her oratory, he passed on. The door was ajar; the evening gloomy and overcast. Pushing open the door gently, he saw a person kneeling before the altar. As he approached nearer, it seemed not a woman, but one in a long

woollen weed, whose back was towards him. The person seemed absorbed in prayer. The Marquis was about to return, when the figure, rising, stood some moments fixed in meditation, without regarding him. The Marquis, expecting the holy person to come forth, and meaning to excuse his uncivil interruption, said, Reverend father, I sought the Lady *Hippolita*.—*Hippolita*! replied a hollow voice camest thou to this castle to seek *Hippolita*? and then the figure, turning slowly round, discovered to *Frederic* the fleshless jaws and empty sockets of a skeleton, wrapt in a hermit's cowl. Angels of grace, protect me! cried *Frederic*, recoiling. Deserve their protection! said the Spectre. *Frederic*, falling on his knees, adjured the Phantom to take pity on him. Dost thou not remember me? said the apparition: Remember the wood of *Joppa*!—Art thou that holy Hermit? cried *Frederic*, trembling; Can I do aught for thy eternal peace?—Wast thou delivered from bondage, said the spectre, to pursue carnal delights?—Hast thou forgotten the buried sabre, and the behest of Heaven engraven on it?—I have not, I have not, said *Frederic*; but say, blest spirit, what is thy errand to me?—what remains to be done?—To forget *Matilda*! said the apparition—and vanished.

*Frederic's* blood froze in his veins. For some minutes he remained motionless. Then, falling prostrate on his face before the altar, he besought the intercession of every saint for pardon. A flood of tears succeeded to this transport; and the image of the beauteous *Matilda*, rushing, in spite of him, on



his thoughts, he lay on the ground in a conflict of penitence and passion. E'er he could recover from this agony of his spirits, the Princess *Hippolita*, with a taper in her hand, entered the oratory alone. Seeing a man, without motion, on the floor, she gave a shriek, concluding him dead. Her fright brought *Frederic* to himself. Rising suddenly, his face bedewed with tears, he would have rushed from her presence; but *Hippolita*, stopping him, conjured him, in the most plaintive accents, to explain the cause of his disorder, and by what strange chance she had found him there in that posture. Ah! virtuous Princess, said the Marquis, penetrated with grief—and stopped. For the love of Heaven, my Lord, said *Hippolita*, disclose the cause of this transport! what mean these doleful sounds, this alarming exclamation on my name? What woes has Heaven still in store for the wretched *Hippolita*?—Yet silent!—By every pitying angel, I adjure thee, noble Prince, continued she, falling at his feet, to disclose the purport of what lies at thy heart—I see thou feelest for me; thou feelest the sharp pangs tha thou inflictest—speak, for pity!—does aught thou knowest concern my child?—I cannot speak, cried *Frederic*, bursting from her—Oh! *Matilda*!

Quitting the Princess thus abruptly, he hastened to his own apartment. At the door of it he was accosted by *Manfred*, who, flushed by wine and love, had come to seek him, and to propose to waste some hours of the night in music and revelling. *Frederic*, offended at an invitation so dissonant from the mood of his soul,

pushed him rudely aside, and, entering his chamber, flung the door intemperately against *Manfred*, and bolted it inwards. The haughty Prince, enraged at this unaccountable behaviour, withdrew in a frame of mind capable of the most fatal excesses. As he crossed the court, he was met by the domestic whom he had planted at the convent, as a spy on *Jerome* and *Theodore*. This man, almost breathless with the haste he had made, informed his Lord, that *Theodore* and some Lady from the castle, were, at that instant, in private conference at the tomb of *Alfonso*, in *St. Nicholas's* church. He had dogged *Theodore* thither, but the gloominess of the night had prevented his discovering who the woman was.

*Manfred*, whose spirits were inflamed, and whom *Isabella* had driven from her on his urging his passion with too little reserve, did not doubt but the inquietude she had expressed had been occasioned by her impatience to meet *Theodore*. Provoked by this conjecture, and enraged at her father, he hastened secretly to the great church. Gliding softly between the aisles, and guided by an imperfect gleam of moonshine that shone faintly through the illuminated windows, he stole towards the tomb of *Alfonso*, to which he was directed by indistinct whispers of the persons he sought.—The first sounds he could distinguish were—Does it, alas! depend on me? *Manfred* will never permit our union.—No, this shall prevent it! cried the tyrant, drawing his dagger, and plunging it over her shoulder into the bosom of the person that spoke—Ah, me! I am slain! cried *Matilda*, sinking; good

Heaven, receive my soul!—Savage, inhuman monster! what hast thou done? cried *Theodore*, rushing on him, and wrenching his dagger from him—Stop, stop thy impious hand! cried *Matilda*: it is my father! *Manfred*, waking as from a trance, beat his breast, twisted his hands in his locks, and endeavoured to recover his dagger from *Theodore*, to dispatch himself. *Theodore*, scarce less distracted, and only mastering the transports of his grief to assist *Matilda*, had now, by his cries, drawn some of the monks to his aid. While part of them endeavoured, in concert with the afflicted *Theodore*, to stop the blood of the dying Princess, the rest prevented *Manfred* from laying violent hands on himself.

*Matilda*, resigning herself patiently to her fate, acknowledged, with looks of grateful love, the zeal of *Theodore*. Yet, oft as her faintness would permit her speech its way, she begged the assistants to comfort her father. *Jerome*, by this time, had learnt the fatal news, and reached the church. His looks seemed to reproach *Theodore*: but, turning to *Manfred*, he said, Now, tyrant! behold the completion of woe fulfilled on thy impious and devoted head! The blood of *Alfonso* cried to Heaven for vengeance, and Heaven has permitted its altar to be polluted by assassination, that thou mightest shed thy own blood at the foot of that Prince's sepulchre!—Cruel man! cried *Matilda*, to aggravate the woes of a parent! may Heaven bless my father, and forgive him as I do! My Lord, my gracious sire, dost thou forgive thy child? Indeed, I came not hither to meet *Theodore*!

I found him praying at this tomb, whither my mother sent me to intercede for thee, for her—dearest father, bless your child, and say you forgive her.—Forgive thee! murderous monster! cried *Manfred*—can assassins forgive! I took thee for *Isabella*; but Heaven directed my bloody hand to the heart of my child—oh! *Matilda*—I cannot utter it—canst thou forgive the blindness of my rage?—I can, I do! and may Heaven confirm it! said *Matilda*—but, while I have life to ask it—Oh! my mother! what will she feel!—will you comfort her, my Lord; will you not put her away? indeed she loves you—oh! I am faint! bear me to the castle—can I live to have her close my eyes?

*Theodore* and the monks besought her earnestly to suffer herself to be borne into the convent; but her instances were so pressing to be carried to the castle, that, placing her on a litter, they conveyed her thither as she requested; *Theodore* supporting her head with his arm, and hanging over her in an agony of despairing love, still endeavoured to inspire her with hopes of life. *Jerome*, on the other side, comforted her with discourses of Heaven, and, holding a crucifix before her, which she bathed with innocent tears, prepared her for her passage to immortality. *Manfred*, plunged in the deepest affliction, followed the litter in despair.

E'er they reached the castle, *Hippolita*, informed of the dreadful catastrophe, had flown to meet her murdered child: but when she saw the afflicted procession, the mightiness of her grief deprived her of

her senses, and she fell lifeless to the earth in a swoon. *Isabella* and *Frederic*, who attended her, were overwhelmed in almost equal sorrow. *Matilda* alone seemed insensible to her own situation: every thought was lost in tenderness for her mother. Ordering the litter to stop, as soon as *Hippolita* was brought to herself, she asked for her father. He approached, unable to speak. *Matilda*, seizing his hand and her mother's, locked them in her own, and then clasped them to her heart. *Manfred* could not support this act of pathetic piety. He dashed himself on the ground, and cursed the day he was born. *Isabella*, apprehensive that these struggles of passion were more than *Matilda* could support, took upon herself to order *Manfred* to be borne to his apartment, while she caused *Matilda* to be conveyed to the nearest chamber. *Hippolita*, scarce more alive than her daughter, was regardless of everything but her: but when the tender *Isabella's* care would have likewise removed her, while the surgeons examined *Matilda's* wound, she cried, Remove me! never! never! I lived but in her, and will expire with her. *Matilda* raised her eyes, at her mother's voice, but closed them again without speaking. Her sinking pulse, and the damp coldness of her hand, soon dispelled all hopes of recovery. *Theodore* followed the surgeons into the outer chamber, and heard them pronounce the fatal sentence, with a transport equal to frenzy—Since she cannot live mine, cried he, at least she shall be mine in death! Father! *Ferome*! will you not join our hands! cried he to the Friar, who, with the Marquis,



had accompanied the surgeons. What means thy distracted rashness? said *Jerome*: Is this an hour for marriage?—It is, it is, cried *Theodore*; alas! there is no other!—Young man, thou art too unadvised, said *Frederic*:—Dost thou think we are to listen to thy fond transports in this hour of fate?—what pretensions hast thou to the Princess?—Those of a Prince, said *Theodore*—of the sovereign of *Otranto*. This reverend man, my father, has informed me who I am.—Thou ravest, said the Marquis: there is no Prince of *Otranto* but myself, now *Manfred*, by murder, by sacrilegious murder, has forfeited all pretensions.—My Lord, said *Jerome*, assuming an air of command, he tells you true. It was not my purpose the secret should have been divulged so soon; but fate presses onward to its work. What his hot-headed passion has revealed, my tongue confirms. Know, Prince, that when *Alfonso* set sail for the *Holy Land*—Is this a season for explanations? cried *Theodore*:—Father, come and unite me to the Princess; she shall be mine—in every other thing I will dutifully obey you. My life, my adored *Matilda*! continued *Theodore*, rushing back into the inner chamber, will you not be mine? will you not bless your—*Isabella* made signs to him to be silent, apprehending the Princess was near her end. What! is she dead? cried *Theodore*: is it possible!—The violence of his exclamations brought *Matilda* to herself. Lifting up her eyes, she looked round for her mother—Life of my soul! I am here, cried *Hippolita*; think not I will quit thee!—Oh! you are too good, said *Matilda*—but weep not

for me, my mother! I am going where sorrow never dwells—*Isabella*, thou hast loved me; wo't thou not supply my fondness to this dear, dear woman?—indeed I am faint!—Oh! my child! my child! said *Hippolita*, in a flood of tears; can I not withhold thee a moment?—It will not be, said *Matilda*—commend me to Heaven:—where is my father?—forgive him, dearest mother—forgive him my death; it was an error—Oh! I had forgotten—dearest mother, I vowed never to see *Theodore* more—perhaps that has drawn down this calamity—but it was not intentional—can you pardon me?—Oh! wound not my agonizing soul! said *Hippolita*; thou never could'st offend me—Alas! she faints! help! help!—I would say something more, said *Matilda*, struggling; but it wonnot be—*Isabella*—*Theodore*—for my sake—Oh!—she expired. *Isabella* and her women tore *Hippolita* from the corse; but *Theodore* threatened destruction to all who attempted to remove him from it. He printed a thousand kisses on her clay-cold hands, and uttered every expression that despairing love could dictate.

*Isabella*, in the mean time, was accompanying the afflicted *Hippolita* to her apartment; but, in the middle of the court, they were met by *Manfred*, who, distracted with his own thoughts, and anxious once more to behold his daughter, was advancing to the chamber where she lay. As the moon was now at its height, he read in the countenances of this unhappy company, the event he dreaded. What? is she dead? cried he, in wild confusion—a clap of thunder, at that

instant, shook the castle to its foundations; the earth rocked, and the clank of more than mortal armour was heard behind. *Frederic* and *Jerome* thought the last day was at hand. The latter, forcing *Theodore* along with them, rushed into the court. The moment *Theodore* appeared, the walls of the castle behind *Manfred* were thrown down with a mighty force, and the form of *Alfonso*, dilated to an immense magnitude, appeared in the center of the ruins. Behold in *Theodore* the true heir of *Alfonso*! said the vision: and having pronounced these words, accompanied by a clap of thunder, it ascended solemnly towards Heaven, where, the clouds parting asunder, the form of *St. Nicholas* was seen, and, receiving *Alfonso's* shade, they were soon wrapt from mortal eyes in a blaze of glory.

The beholders fell prostrate on their faces, acknowledging the divine will. The first that broke silence was *Hippolita*. My Lord, said she, to the desponding *Manfred*, behold the vanity of human greatness! *Conrad* is gone! *Matilda* is no more! in *Theodore* we view the true Prince of *Otranto*. By what miracle he is so, I know not—suffice it to us, our doom is pronounced! shall we not,—can we do other than dedicate the few deplorable hours we have to live, in deprecating the farther wrath of heaven? Heaven ejects us—whither can we fly, but to yon holy cells that yet offer us a retreat?—Thou guiltless, but unhappy woman! unhappy by my crimes! replied *Manfred*, my heart, at last, is open to thy devout admonitions. Oh! could—but it cannot be—ye are

lost in wonder—let me at last do justice on myself! To heap shame on my own head is all the satisfaction I have left to offer to offended Heaven. My story has drawn down these judgments: let my confession atone—but ah! what can atone for usurpation, and a murdered child! a child murdered in a consecrated place!—List, sirs, and may this bloody record be a warning to future tyrants!

*Alfonso*, ye all know, died in the *Holy Land*—ye would interrupt me; ye would say he came not fairly to his end—it is most true—why else this bitter cup which *Manfred* must drink to the dregs? *Ricardo*, my grandfather, was his chamberlain—I would draw a veil over my ancestor's crimes—but it is in vain! *Alfonso* died by poison. A fictitious will declared *Ricardo* his heir. His crimes pursued him—yet he lost no *Conrad*, no *Matilda*! I pay the price of usurpation for all! A storm overtook him. Haunted by his guilt, he vowed to *St. Nicholas* to found a church and two convents, if he lived to reach *Otranto*. The sacrifice was accepted: the saint appeared to him in a dream, and promised that *Ricardo's* posterity should reign in *Otranto*, until the rightful owner should be grown too large to inhabit the castle, and as long as issue male from *Ricardo's* loins should remain to enjoy it—Alas! alas! nor male nor female, except myself, remains of all his wretched race!—I have done—the woes of these three days speak the rest. How this young man can be *Alfonso's* heir, I know not—yet I do not doubt it. His are these dominions; I resign them—yet I knew not *Alfonso* had an heir—

I question not the will of Heaven—poverty and prayer must fill up the woeful space until *Manfred* shall be summoned to *Ricardo*.

What remains, is my part to declare, said *Jerome*. When *Alfonso* set sail for the *Holy Land*, he was driven by a storm on the coast of *Sicily*. The other vessel, which bore *Ricardo* and his train, as your Lordship must have heard, was separated from him.—It is most true, said *Manfred*; and the title you give me is more than an outcast can claim—well! be it so—proceed. *Jerome* blushed, and continued. For three months, Lord *Alfonso* was wind-bound in *Sicily*. There he became enamoured of a fair virgin, named *Victoria*. He was too pious to tempt her to forbidden pleasures. They were married.—Yet, deeming this amour incongruous with the holy vow of arms by which he was bound, he determined to conceal their nuptials, until his return from the Crusade, when he purposed to seek and acknowledge her for his lawful wife. He left her pregnant. During his absence, she was delivered of a daughter: but scarce had she felt a mother's pangs, ere she heard the fatal rumour of her Lord's death, and the succession of *Ricardo*. What could a friendless, helpless woman do? Would her testimony avail?—yet, my Lord, I have an authentic writing—It needs not, said *Manfred*; the horrors of these days, the vision we have but now seen, all corroborate thy evidence beyond a thousand parchments. *Matilda's* death, and my expulsion—Be composed, my Lord, said *Hippolita*; this holy man did not mean to recal your griefs. *Jerome* proceeded.



I shall not dwell on what is needless.—The daughter of which *Victoria* was delivered, was, at her maturity, bestowed in marriage on me. *Victoria* died; and the secret remained locked in my breast. *Theodore's* narrative has told the rest.

The Friar ceased. The disconsolate company retired to the remaining part of the castle. In the morning, *Manfred* signed his abdication of the principality, with the approbation of *Hippolita*, and each took on them the habit of religion, in the neighbouring convents. *Frederic* offered his daughter to the new Prince, which *Hippolita's* tenderness for *Isabella* concurred to promote: but *Theodore's* grief was too fresh to admit the thought of another love; and it was not until after frequent discourses with *Isabella* of his dear *Matilda*, that he was persuaded he could know no happiness but in the society of one, with whom he could for ever indulge the melancholy that had taken possession of his soul.

# THE MYSTERIOUS MOTHER



T H E  
Mysterious Mother.

A  
T R A G E D Y.

By Mr. HORACE WALPOLE.

*Sit mihi fas audita loqui!*      VIRGIL.

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## PERSONS

COUNTESS of Narbonne.

COUNT EDMUND, her Son.

FLORIAN, his Friend.

ADELIZA, an Orphan.

BENEDICT } Friars.

MARTIN }

PETER, Porter of the Castle.

MARIA } Damsels attending the Countess.

ELINOR } Mutes.

Chorus of Orphans.

Chorus of Friars.

*The Scene lies at the Castle of Narbonne; partly on a  
Platform before the Gate, partly in a Garden within  
the Walls.*



# THE MYSTERIOUS MOTHER

## A TRAGEDY

### ACT the FIRST

#### SCENE I

#### *A Platform before the Castle*

FLORIAN

WHAT awfull silence! How these antique  
towers

And vacant courts chill the suspended soul,  
Till expectation wears the cast of fear;  
And fear, half-ready to become devotion,  
Mumbles a kind of mental orison,  
It knows not wherefore. What a kind of being  
Is circumstance!

I am a soldier, and were yonder battlements  
Garnish'd with combatants, and cannon-mounted,  
My daring breast would bound with exultation,  
And glorious hopes enliven this drear scene.  
*Now* dare not I scarce tread to my own hearing,  
Lest echo borrow superstition's tongue,  
And seem to answer me, like one departed.  
I met a peasant, and enquir'd my way:  
The carle, not rude of speech, but like the tenant  
Of some night-haunted ruin, bore an aspect  
Of horror, worn to habitude. He bade

God bless me; and pass'd on. I urg'd him farther:  
 Good master, cried he, go not to the castle;  
 There sorrow ever dwells, and moping misery.  
 I press'd him yet——None there, said he, are welcome,  
 But now and then a mass-priest, and the poor;  
 To whom the pious Countess deals her alms,  
 On covenant, that each revolving night  
 They beg of heav'n the health of her son's soul  
 And of her own: but often as returns  
 The twentieth of September, they are bound  
 Fast from the midnight watch to pray till morn.—  
 More would he not disclose, or knew not more.  
 —What precious mummary! Her son in exile,  
 She wastes on monks and beggars his inheritance,  
 For his soul's health! I never knew a woman  
 But lov'd our bodies or our souls too well.  
 Each master-whim maintains its hour of empire,  
 And obstinately faithfull to its dictates,  
 With equal ardour, equal importunity,  
 They tease us to be damn'd or to be sav'd.  
 I hate to love or pray too long.

## SCENE II

PORTER of the castle, FLORIAN

PORTER

Methought

I heard a stranger's voice—What lack you, sir?

FLORIAN

Good fellow, who inhabits here?

PORTER

I do.

FLORIAN

Belike this castle is not thine.

PORTER

Belike so:

But be it whose it may, this is no haunt  
For revellers and gallants—pass your way.

FLORIAN

Thou churl! Is this your Gallic hospitality?  
Thy lady, on my life, would not thus rudely  
Chide from her presence a bewilder'd knight.

PORTER

Thou know'st my lady then!—Thou know'st her not.  
Canst thou in hair-cloths vex those dainty limbs?  
Canst thou on reeking pavements and cold marble,  
In meditation pass the livelong night?  
Canst mortify that flesh, my rosy minion,  
And bid thy rebel appetite refrain  
From goblets foaming wine, and costly viands?  
These are the deeds, my youngster, must draw down  
My lady's ever heav'n-directed eye.

FLORIAN

In sooth, good friend, my knighthood is not school'd  
In voluntary rigours—I can fast,  
March supperless, and make cold earth my pillow,  
When my companions know no choicer fare.  
But seldom roost in churches, or reject  
The ready banquet, or a willing fair one.



PORTER

Angels defend us! What a reprobate!  
 Yon mould'ring porch, for sixteen years and more  
 Has not been struck with such unhallow'd sounds.  
 Hence to thy lewd companions!

FLORIAN

Father greybeard,  
 I cry you mercy;—nor was it my intention  
 To wound your reverence's saint-like organs.  
 But come, thou hast known other days—can'st tell  
 Of banquettings and dancings—'twas not always thus.

PORTER

No, no—time was—my lord, the Count of Narbonne,  
 A prosp'rous gentleman, were he alive,  
 We should not know these moping melancholies.  
 Heaven rest his soul! I marvel not my lady  
 Cherishes his remembrance, for he was  
 Comely to sight, and wond'rous goodly built.  
 They say, his son, Count Edmund's mainly like him.  
 'Would these old arms, that serv'd his grandfather,  
 Could once enfold him! I should part in peace.

FLORIAN

What, if I bring thee tidings of Count Edmund!

PORTER

Mercy befall me!—now my dream is out,  
 Last night the raven croak'd, and from the bars  
 Of our lodge-fire flitted a messenger—  
 I knew no good would follow—Bring you ill tidings,  
 Sir gentleman?

FLORIAN

(This is a solemn fool,  
Or solemn knave) [*aside*]. shouldst thou indeed  
rejoice  
To see Count Edmund? Would thy noble mistress  
Spring with a mother's joy to clasp her son?

PORTER

Oh! no, no, no.—He must not here—alas!  
He must not here set foot—But tell me, stranger,  
I prithee say, does my old master's heir  
Still breathe this vital air? Is he in France?  
Is he within some ten, or twenty leagues,  
Or fifty? I am hearty yet, have all my limbs,  
And I would make a weary pilgrimage  
To kiss his gracious hand, and at his feet  
Lay my old bones—for here I ne'er must see him.  
[*Weeps.*]

FLORIAN

Thou good old man, forgive a soldier's mirth.  
But say, why Narbonne's heir from Narbonne's land  
Is banish'd, driven by a ruthless mother?

PORTER

Ah! sir, 'tis hard indeed—but spare his mother;  
Such virtue never dwelt in female form.  
Count Edmund—but he was indeed a stripling,  
A very lad—it was the trick of youth,  
And we have all our sins, or we have had;  
Yet still no pardon—Think'st thou not, my lord,  
My late kind master, e'er he knew my lady,  
Wist not what woman was?—I warrant him—

But so—Count Edmund being not sixteen,  
 A lusty youth, his father's very image—  
 Oh! he has play'd me many a trick—good sir,  
 Does my young master ever name old Peter?  
 Well! but I prate—you must forgive my age;  
 I come to th' point—Her name was Beatrice;  
 A roguish eye—she ne'er would look on me,  
 Or we had sav'd full many a woeful day!  
 Mark you me well?

FLORIAN

I do.

PORTER

This Beatrice——

But hark! my lady comes—retire awhile  
 Beyond those yews—anon I'll tell you more.

FLORIAN

May I not greet her?

PORTER

For my office, no:

'Twere forfeit of my badge to hold a parley  
 With one of near thy years.

[FLORIAN *withdraws*.

[*The COUNTESS in weeds, with a crucifix in her hand, issues from the castle, accompanied by two maidens, and passes over the stage. When she is gone, FLORIAN returns.*

'Tis ever thus.

At break of morn, she hies to yonder abbey,  
 And prostrate o'er some monumental stone,

Seems more to wait her doom, than ask to shun it.  
 The day is pass'd in ministring to wants  
 Of health or means; the closing eve beholds  
 New tears, new pray'rs, or haggard meditation.  
 But if cold moonshine, deep'ning ev'ry frown  
 Of these impending towers, invite her steps,  
 She issues forth.—Beshrew me, but I tremble,  
 When my own keys discharge the drawbridge chains,  
 And rattle thro' the castle's farthest vaults.  
 Then have I seen this sad, this sober mourner,  
 With frantic gesture and disorder'd step——  
 But hush—Who moves up yonder avenue?  
 It is—no—stay—i' faith! but it is he,  
 My lady's confessor, with friar Martin.  
 Quick hie thee hence—should that same meddling  
                     monk  
 Observe our conf'rence, there were fine work toward.

FLORIAN

You will not leave your tale unfinished?

PORTER

Mass! but I will—a tale will pay no stipend.  
 These fifty winters have I borne this staff,  
 And will not lose my porridge for my prating.

FLORIAN

Well! but Count Edmund—wo't not hear of him?

PORTER

Aye, bless his name! at any leisure hour.  
 This evening, e'er the shutting of the gates,  
 Loiter about yon grange; I'll come to thee.  
 So now, begone—away!                      [*exeunt severally.*]

M

## SCENE III

BENEDICT, MARTIN

BENEDICT

Ay! sift her, sift her—  
 As if I had not prob'd her very soul,  
 And wound me round her heart—I tell thee, brother,  
 This woman was not cast in human mould.  
 Ten such would foil a council, would unbuild  
 Our Roman church—In her, devotion's real.  
 Our beads, our hymns, our saints, amuse her not:  
 Nay, not confession, not repeating o'er  
 Her darling sins; has any charms for her.  
 I have mark'd her praying: not one wand'ring  
                   thought  
 Seems to steal meaning from her words.—She prays,  
 Because she feels, and feels, because a sinner.

MARTIN

What is this secret sin; this untold tale,  
 That art cannot extract, nor penance cleanse?  
 Loss of a husband, sixteen years enjoy'd,  
 And dead as many, could not stamp such sorrow.  
 Nor could she be his death's artificer,  
 And now affect to weep it—I have heard,  
 That chasing, as he homeward rode, a stag,  
 Chaf'd by the hounds, with sudden onset slew  
 Th' adventurous Count.

BENEDICT

                  'Twas so; and yet, my brother,  
 My mind has more than once imputed blood



To this incessant mourner. Beatrice,  
The damsel for whose sake she holds in exile  
Her only son, has never, since the night  
Of his incontinence, been seen or heard of.

MARTIN

'Tis clear, 'tis clear; nor will her prudent tongue  
Accuse its owner.

BENEDICT

Judge not rashly, brother.  
I oft have shifted my discourse to murder:  
She notes it not. Her muscles hold their place,  
Nor discompos'd, nor firm'd to steadiness.  
No sudden flushing, and no falt'ring lip:  
Nor, tho' she pities, lifts she to her eyes  
Her handkerchief, to palliate her disorder.  
There the wound rankles not.—I fix'd on love,  
The failure of the sex, and aptest cause  
Of each attendant crime.—

MARTIN

Ay, brother, there  
We master all their craft. Touch but that string——

BENEDICT

Still, brother, do you err. She own'd to me,  
That, tho' of nature warm, the passion love  
Did ne'er anticipate her choice. The Count,  
Her husband, so ador'd and so lamented,  
Won not her fancy, till the nuptial rites  
Had with the sting of pleasure taught her passion.  
This, with such modest truth, and that truth heighten'd

By conscious sense, that holds deceit a weakness,  
 She utter'd, I would pawn my order's credit  
 On her veracity.

MARTIN

Then whither turn  
 To worm her secret out?

BENEDICT

I know not that.  
 She will be silent, but she scorns a falshood.  
 And thus while frank on all things, but her secret,  
 I know, I know it not.

MARTIN

Till she disclose it,  
 Deny her absolution.

BENEDICT

She will take none:  
 Offer'd, she scoffs it; and withheld, demands not.  
 Nay, vows she will not load her sinking soul  
 With incantations.

MARTIN

This is heresy;  
 Rank heresy; and holy church should note it.

BENEDICT

Be patient, brother.—Tho' of adamant  
 Her reason, charity dissolves that rock,  
 —And surely we have tasted of the stream.  
 Nay, one unguarded moment may disclose  
 This mystic tale—then, brother, what a harvest,  
 When masters of her bosom-guilt!—Age too

May numb her faculties.—Or soon, or late,  
A praying woman must become our spoil.

MARTIN

Her zeal may falter.

BENEDICT

Not in solitude.

I nurse her in new horrors; form her tenants  
To fancy visions, phantoms; and report them.  
She mocks their fond credulity—but trust me,  
Her memory retains their colouring.  
Oft times it paints her dreams; and ebon night  
Is no logician. I have known her call  
For lights, e'er she could combat its impressions.  
I too, tho' often scorn'd, relate my dreams,  
And wond'rous voices heard; that she may think me,  
At least an honest bigot; nor remember  
I tried to practice on her fears, and foil'd,  
Give o'er my purpose.

MARTIN

This is masterly.

BENEDICT

Poor mastery! when I am more in awe  
Of my own penitent! than she of me.  
My genius is command; art, but a tool  
My groveling fortune forces me to use.  
Oh! were I seated high as my ambition,  
I'd place this naked foot on necks of monarchs,  
And make them bow to creeds myself would laugh at.

MARTIN

By humbler arts our mighty fabric rose.  
 Win power by craft; wear it with ostentation;  
 For confidence is half-security.  
 Deluded men think boldness, conscious strength;  
 And grow the slaves of their own want of doubt.  
 Gain to the Holy See this fair domain;  
 A crimson bonnet may reward your toils,  
 And the rich harvest prove at last your own.

BENEDICT

Never, while Edmund lives. This steady woman  
 Can ne'er be pious with so many virtues.  
 Justice is interwoven in her frame;  
 Nor will she wrong the son she will not see.  
 She loves him not; yet mistress of his fortunes,  
 His ample exhibition speaks her bounty.  
 She destines him whate'er his father's love  
 Gave blindly to her will. Her alms, her charities,  
 Usurp'd from her own wants, she sets apart  
 A scanty portion only for her ward,  
 Young Adeliza.

MARTIN

Say her son were dead,  
 And Adeliza veil'd—

BENEDICT

I press the latter  
 With fruitless ardour. Often as I urge it,  
 She pleads the maiden's flushing cheek, and nature,  
 That speaks in characters of glowing rose  
 Its modest appetites and timid wishes.

Her sex, she says, when gratified, are frail;  
When check'd, a hurricane of boundless passions.  
Then, with sweet irony and sad, she wills me  
Ask my own breast, if cowls and scapularies  
Are charms all powerful to subdue desire?

MARTIN

'Twere wiser school the maiden: lead the train  
Of young ideas to a fancied object.  
A mental spouse may fill her hov'ring thoughts,  
And bar their fixing on some earthly lover.

BENEDICT

This is already done—but Edmund's death  
Were hopes more solid—

MARTIN

First report him dead;  
His letters intercepted—

BENEDICT

Greatly thought!  
Thou true son of the church!—and lo! where comes  
Our patroness—leave me; I will not lose  
An instant. I will sound her inmost soul,  
And mould it to the moment of projection.

[*Exit* MARTIN.

[BENEDICT *retires within the castle.*



## SCENE IV

COUNTESS, TWO MAIDENS

COUNTESS

Haste thee, Maria, to the western tower,  
 And learn if th' aged pilgrim dozes yet.  
 You, Elinor, attend my little orphans,  
 And when their task is done, prepare their breakfast.  
 But scant th' allowance of the red-hair'd urchin,  
 That maim'd the poor man's cur.—Ah! happy me!  
*[The damsels go in.]*

If sentiment, untutor'd by affliction,  
 Had taught my temperate blood to feel for others,  
 E'er pity, perching on my mangled bosom,  
 Like flies on wounded flesh, had made me shrink  
 More with compunction than with sympathy!  
 Alas! must guilt then ground our very virtues!  
 Grow they on sin alone, and not on grace?  
 While Narbonne liv'd, my fully-sated soul  
 Thought none unhappy—for it did not think!  
 In pleasures roll'd whole summer suns away;  
 And if a pensive visage cross'd my path,  
 I deem'd the wearer envious or ill-natur'd.  
 What anguish had I blessedly redress'd,  
 But that I was too bless'd!—Well! peace is fled,  
 Ne'er to return! nor dare I snap the thread  
 Of life, while misery may want a friend.  
 Despair and Hell must wait, while pity needs  
 My ministry—Eternity has scope  
 Enough to punish me, tho' I should borrow  
 A few short hours to sacrifice to charity.

SCENE V

BENEDICT, COUNTESS

BENEDICT

I sought you, lady.

COUNTESS

Happily I'm found.

Who needs the widow's mite?

BENEDICT

None ask your aid.

Your gracious foresight still prevents occasion:  
And your poor beadsman joys to meet your presence,  
Uncumber'd with a suit. It pains my soul,  
Oft as I tax your bounty, lest I seem  
A craving or immodest almoner.

COUNTESS

No more of this, good father. I suspect not  
One of your holy order of dissembling:  
Suspect not me of loving flattery.  
Pass a few years, and I shall be a corpse—  
Will flattery then new cloath my skeleton,  
Fill out these hollow jaws? Willt give me virtues?  
Or at the solemn audit pass for truth,  
And varnish o'er my stains?

BENEDICT

The church could seal

Your pardon—but you scorn it. In your pride  
Consists your danger. Yours are Pagan virtues:  
As such I praise them—but as such condemn them.

COUNTESS

Father, my *crimes* are Pagan; my belief  
Too orthodox to trust to erring man.  
What! shall I, foul with guilt, and self-condemn'd,  
Presume to kneel, where angels kneel appal'd,  
And plead a priest's certificate for pardon?  
While he, perchance, before my blasted eyes  
Shall sink to woes, endless, unutterable,  
For having fool'd me into that presumption.

BENEDICT

Is he to blame, trusting to what he grants?

COUNTESS

Am I to blame, not trusting what he grants?

BENEDICT

Yet faith—

COUNTESS

I have it not—Why shakes my soul  
With nightly terrors? Courage such as mine  
Would start at nought but guilt. 'Tis from within  
I tremble. Death would be felicity,  
Were there no retrospect. What joys have I?  
What pleasure softens, or what friendship sooths  
My aching bosom?—I have lost my husband:  
My own decree has banish'd my own son.

BENEDICT

Last night I dreamt your son was with the blessed.

COUNTESS

Would heav'n he were!

BENEDICT

Do you then wish his death?

COUNTESS

Should I not wish him blest!

BENEDICT

Belike he is:

I never knew my Friday's dreams erroneous.

COUNTESS

Nor I knew superstition in the right.

BENEDICT

Madam, I must no longer hear this language.

You do abuse my patience. I have borne,

For your soul's health, and hoping your conversion,

Opinions most deprav'd. It ill beseems

My holy function to give countenance,

By lending ear, to such pernicious tenets.

The judgments hanging o'er your destin'd head

May reach ev'n me—I see it! I am wrapt

Beyond my bearing! my prophetic soul

Views the red falchion of eternal justice

Cut off your sentenc'd race—your son is dead!

COUNTESS

Father, we no prophetic dæmon bear

Within our breast, but conscience. *That* has spoken

Words more tremendous than this acted zeal,

This poetry of fond enthusiasm

Can conjure up. It is the still small voice

That breathes conviction. 'Tis that voice has told me,

'Twas my son's birth, not his mortality,

Must drown my soul in woe.—Those tears are shed.

BENEDICT

Unjust, uncharitable as your words,  
 I pardon them. Illy of me you deem;  
 I know it, lady. 'Tis humiliation:  
 As such I bow to it—yet dear I tender  
 Your peace of mind. Dismiss your worthless servant:  
 His pray'rs shall still be yours.

COUNTESS

Forgive me, father:

Discretion does not guide my words. I meant  
 No insult on your holy character.

BENEDICT

No, lady; chuse some other monitor,  
 Whose virtues may command your estimation.  
 Your useless beadsman shall behold with joy  
 A worthier man mediate your peace with heav'n.

COUNTESS

Alas! 'till reconcil'd with my own breast  
 What peace is there for me!

BENEDICT

In th' neighb'ring district  
 There lives a holy man, whose sanctity  
 Is mark'd with wond'rous gifts. Grace smiles upon  
                   him;  
 Conversion tracks his footsteps: miracles  
 Spring from his touch; his sacred casuistry  
 Pours balm into despair. Consult with him.  
 Unfold th' impenetrable mystery,  
 That sets your soul and you at endless discord.



COUNTESS

Consult a holy man! Inquire of him!  
 —Good father, wherefore? What should I inquire?<sup>1</sup>  
 Must I be taught of him, that guilt is woe?  
 That innocence alone is happiness?  
 That martyrdom itself shall leave the villain  
 The villain that it found him? Must I learn  
 That minutes stamp'd with crimes are past recall?  
 That joys are momentary; and remorse  
 Eternal? Shall he teach me charms and spells,  
 To make my sense believe against my sense?  
 Shall I think practices and penances  
 Will, if he say so, give the health of virtue  
 To gnawing self-reproach?—I know they cannot.  
 Nor could one risen from the dead proclaim  
 This truth in deeper sounds to my conviction.  
 We want no preacher to distinguish vice  
 From virtue. At our birth the god reveal'd  
 All conscience needs to know. No codicil  
 To duty's rubric here and there was plac'd  
 In some saint's casual custody. Weak minds  
 Want their soul's fortune told by oracles  
 And holy juglers. Me, nor oracles,  
 Nor prophets, Death alone can certify,  
 Whether, when justice's full dues exacted,  
 Mercy shall grant one drop to slake my torment.  
 —Here, father, break we off; you to your calling;  
 I to my tears and mournfull occupation. [Exeunt.

END OF THE FIRST ACT

<sup>1</sup> *Imitated from Cato's speech in Lucan, beginning, Quid quaeri, Labiene, jubes?*

## ACT the SECOND

*The SCENE continues*

COUNT EDMUND, FLORIAN

EDMUND

Doubt not, my friend; Time's pencil, hardships war,  
 Some taste of pleasure too, have chas'd the bloom  
 Of ruddy comeliness, and stamp'd this face  
 With harsher lineaments, that well may mock  
 The prying of a mother's eye.—a mother,  
 Thro' whose firm nerves tumultuous instinct's flood  
 Ne'er gush'd with eager eloquence, to tell her,  
 This is your son! your heart's own voice proclaims  
 him.

FLORIAN

If not her love, my lord, suspect her hatred.  
 Those jarring passions spring from the same source:  
 Hate is distemper'd love.

EDMUND

Why should she hate me?

For that my opening passion's swelling ardour  
 Prompted congenial necessary joy,  
 Was that a cause?—Nor was she then so rigid.  
 No sanctified dissembler had possess'd  
 Her scar'd imagination, teaching her,  
 That holiness begins where nature ends.  
 No, Florian, she herself was woman then;  
 A sensual woman. Nor satiety,

Sickness and age, and virtue's frowardness,  
Had so obliterated pleasure's relish—  
She might have pardon'd what she felt so well.

FLORIAN

Forgive me, Edmund; nay, nor think I preach,  
If I, God wot, of morals loose enough,  
Seem to condemn you. You have often told me,  
The night, the very night that to your arms  
Gave pretty Beatrice's melting beauties,  
Was the same night on which your father died.

EDMUND

'Tis true—and thou, sage monitor, dost thou  
Hold love a crime so irremissible?  
Wouldst thou have turn'd thee from a willing girl,  
To sing a requiem to thy father's soul?  
I thought my mother busied with her tears,  
Her faintings, and her masses, while I stole  
To Beatrice's chamber.—How my mother  
Became appriz'd, I know not: but her heart,  
Never too partial to me, grew estrang'd.  
Estrang'd!—aversion in its fellest mood  
Scowl'd from her eye, and drove me from her sight.  
She call'd me impious: nam'd my honest lewdness,  
A prophanation of my father's ashes.  
I knelt and wept, and, like a puling boy,  
For now my blood was cool, believ'd, confess'd  
My father's hov'ring spirit incens'd against me.  
This weak confession but inflam'd her wrath;  
And when I would have bath'd her hand with tears,  
She snatch'd it back with horror.

FLORIAN

'Twas the trick  
 Of over-acted sorrow. Grief fatigues;  
 And each collateral circumstance is seiz'd  
 To cheat th' uneasy feeling. Sable chambers,  
 The winking lamp, and pomp of midnight woe,  
 Are but a specious theatre, on which  
 Th' inconstant mind with decency forgets  
 Its inward tribute. Who can doubt the love  
 Which to a father's shade devotes the son?

*[ironically.]*

EDMUND

Still must I doubt: still deem some mystery,  
 Beyond a widow's pious artifice,  
 Lies hid beneath aversion so relentless.  
 All my inheritance, my lordships, castles,  
 My father's lavish love bequeath'd my mother.  
 Chose she some second partner of her bed,  
 Or did she waste her wealth on begging saints,  
 And rogues that act contrition, it were proof  
 Of her hypocrisy, or lust of fame  
 In monkish annals. But to me her hand  
 Is bounteous, as her heart is cold. I tell thee,  
 Bating enjoyment of my native soil,  
 Narbonne's revenues are as fully mine,  
 As if I held them by the strength of charters.

FLORIAN

Why set them on the hazard then, when she,  
 Who deals them, may revoke? Your absence hence  
 The sole condition.

EDMUND

I am weary, Florian,  
Of such a vagrant life. Befits it me,  
Sprung from a race of heroes, Narbonne's prince,  
To lend my casual arm's approved valour  
To quarrels, nor my country's nor my own?  
To stain my sword with random blood!—I fought  
At Buda 'gainst the Turk—a holy war,  
So was it deem'd—I smote the turban'd race:  
Did zeal or did ambition nerve my blow?  
Or matter'd it to me, on Buda's domes  
Whether the crescent or the cross prevail'd?  
Mean time on alien climes I dissipated  
Wealth from my subjects wrung, the peasant's tribute,  
Earn'd by his toil. Mean time in ruin laid  
My mouldring castles—Yes, ye moss-grown walls!  
Ye tow'rs defenceless!—I revisit ye  
Shame-stricken.—Where are all your trophies now?  
Your thronged courts, the revelry, the tumult,  
That spoke the grandeur of my house, the homage  
Of neighb'ring barons? Thus did Thibalt, Raoul,  
Or Clodomir, my brave progenitors,  
Creep like a spy, and watch to thrid your gates  
Unnotic'd? No; with martial attributes,  
With waving banners and enlivening fifes,  
They bade your portal wide unfold its jaws,  
And welcome them and triumph.

FLORIAN

True, my lord:  
They reign'd the monarchs of a score of miles;



Imperial lords of ev'ry trembling cottage  
 Within their cannon's mandate. Deadly feuds  
 For obsolete offences, now array'd  
 Their livery'd banditti, prompt to deal  
 On open vallies and unguarded herds,  
 On helpless virgins and unweapon'd boors,  
 The vengeance of their tribe. Sometimes they dar'd  
 To scowl defiance to the distant throne,  
 Imprison'd, canton'd inaccessibly  
 In their own rock-built dungeons—Are these glories  
 My Edmund's soul ambition to revive?  
 Thus would he bless his vassals!

EDMUND

Thy reproof,

My friend, is just. But had I not a cause,  
 A tender cause, that prompted my return?  
 This cruel parent, whom I blame, and mourn,  
 Whose harshness I resent, whose woes I pity,  
 Has won my love, by winning my respect.  
 Her letters! Florian; such unstudied strains  
 Of virtuous eloquence! She bids me, yes,  
 This praying Magdalen enjoins my courage  
 To emulate my great forefathers' deeds.  
 Tells me, that shame and guilt alone are mortal;  
 That death but bars the possibility  
 Of frailty, and embalms untainted honour.  
 Then blots and tears efface some half-told woe  
 Lab'ring in her full bosom. I decypher'd  
 In one her blessing granted, and eras'd.  
 And yet what follow'd, mark'd anxiety

For my soul's welfare. I must know this riddle.  
 I must, will comfort her. She cannot surely,  
 After such perils, wounds by her command  
 Encounter'd, after sixteen exil'd years,  
 Spurn me, when kneeling—Think'st thou, 'tis  
 possible?

FLORIAN

I would not think it; but a host of priests  
 Surround her. They, good men, are seldom found  
 To plead the cause of pity. Self-denial,  
 Whose dissonance from nature's kindest laws  
 By contradicting, wins on our perverseness,  
 Is rank fanaticism's belov'd machine.  
 Oh! 'twill be heroism, a sacrifice,  
 To curb the torrent of maternal fondness!  
 You shall be beggar'd, that the saint your mother  
 May, by cowl'd sycophants and canting jugglers,  
 Be hail'd, be canoniz'd a new Teresa.  
 Pray be not seen here: let's again to th' wars.

EDMUND

No, Florian; my dull'd soul is sick of riot:  
 Sick of the thoughtless jollity of camps,  
 Where revelry subsists on desolation,  
 And shouts of joy contend with dying groans.  
 Our sports are fleeting; snatch'd, perhaps, not  
 granted.  
 'Tis time to bid adieu to vagrant pleasure,  
 And fix the wanderer love. Domestic bliss—

FLORIAN

Yes, your fair pensioner, young Adeliza,

Has sober'd your inconstancy. Her smiles  
 Were exquisite—to rule a family! [*ironically.*  
 So matron-like an air—She must be fruitfull.

EDMUND

Pass we this levity—'Tis true, the maiden  
 Is beauty's type renew'd. Like blooming Eve  
 In nature's young simplicity, and blushing  
 With wonder at creation's opening glow,  
 She charms, unknowing what it is to charm.

FLORIAN

'This is a lover's language—Is she kind?

EDMUND

Cold as the metal bars that part her from me;  
 She listens, but replies not to my purpose.

FLORIAN

How gain'd you then admittance?

EDMUND

This whole month,  
 While waiting your arrival, I have haunted  
 Her convent's parlour. 'Tis my mother's wish  
 To match her nobly. Hence her guardian abbess  
 Admits such visitors as claim her notice  
 By worthy bearing, and convenient splendor.  
 O Florian, union with that favour'd maiden  
 Might reconcile my mother—Hark! what sound—  
 [*A chapel bell rings.*

FLORIAN

A summons to some office of devotion.  
 My lord, weigh well what you project—

[*Singing within.*

EDMUND

I hear  
Voices that seem approaching—hush! they sing.  
Listen!

FLORIAN

No; let us hence: you will be known.

EDMUND

They cannot know me—see!

## SCENE II

FLORIAN, EDMUND, MARTIN, ORPHANS

*[A procession of children of both sexes, neatly cloathed in a white and blue uniform, issue from the castle, followed by friar MARTIN, and advance towards the stage-door. They stop, and the children repeat the following hymn, part of which they should have sung within the castle.]*

I

Throne of justice! lo! we bend,  
Thither dare our hopes ascend,  
Where seraphs, wrapt in light'ning rays,  
Dissolve in mercy's tender blaze.

II

Hear us! harmless orphans hear!  
For her who dries our falling tear.  
Hush her sorrows; calm her breast:  
Give her, what she gives us, rest.

## III

Guard our spotless souls from sin!  
 Grant us virtue's palm to win!  
 Cloath the penitent with grace;  
 And guilt's foul spots efface! efface!

## EDMUND

I'll speak to them.  
 Sweet children—or thou sanctified conductor,  
 Give me to know what solemn pilgrimage,  
 What expiation of offences past,  
 Thus sadly ye perform? In whose behoof  
 To win a blessing, raise these little suppliants  
 Their artless hands to heav'n? Pray pardon too  
 A soldier's curiosity.

## MARTIN

The dew

Of grace and peace attend your steps. You seem  
 A stranger, or you could but know, sir knight,  
 That Narbonne's pious Countess dwells within:  
 A lady most disconsolate. Her lord,  
 Her best-beloved, by untimely fate  
 Was snatch'd away in lusty life's full 'vantage—  
 But no account made up! no absolution!  
 Hence scant the distance of a mile he fell.  
 His weeping relict o'er his spot of doom  
 A goodly cross erected. Thither we,  
 At his year's mind, in sad and solemn guise,  
 Proceed to chant our holy dirge, and offer  
 Due intercession for his soul's repose.



EDMUND

'Tis fitly done. And dar'd a voice profane  
Join in the chorus of your holy office,  
Myself would kneel for Narbonne's peace.

MARTIN

Young sir,

It glads my soul to hear such pious breathings  
From one, whose occupation rarely scans  
The distance 'twixt enjoyment and the tomb.  
Say, didst thou know the Count?

EDMUND

I knew his son.

MARTIN

Count Edmund? Where sojourns he?

EDMUND

In the grave.

MARTIN

Is Edmund dead? say, how?

EDMUND

He fell at Buda:

And not to his dishonour.

MARTIN

(Welcome sounds! [*aside*.

I must know more of this)—proceed, my children;  
Short of the cross I'll overtake your steps.

ORPHAN GIRL

Oh! father, but I dare not pass without you  
By the church-porch. They say the Count sits there,  
With clotted locks, and eyes like burning stars.  
Indeed I dare not go.

## OTHER CHILDREN

Nor I. Nor I.

MARTIN

My loves, he will not harm such innocents.

But wait me at the bridge: I'll strait be with ye.

*[Children go out reluctantly.]*

FLORIAN

I marvel, father, gravity like yours

Should yield assent to tales of such complexion;

Permitting them in baby fantasy

To strike their dangerous root.

MARTIN

I marvel not

That levity like yours, unhallow'd boy,

Should spend its idle shaft on serious things.

Your comrade's bearing warrants no such licence.

FLORIAN

Think'st thou, because my friend with humble  
fervour

Kneels to Omnipotence, each gossip's dream,

Each village-fable domineers in turn

His brain's distemper'd nerves? Think'st thou a  
soldier

Must by his calling be an impious braggart?

Or being not, a superstitious slave?

True valour, owning no preheminance

In equals, dares not wag presumption's tongue

Against high heav'n.

MARTIN

In us respect heav'n's servants.

FLORIAN

Monks may reach heav'n, but never came from thence.

*[Violent storm of thunder and lightning.]*

MARTIN

Will this convince thee! Where's the gossip's dream?

The village-fable now? Hear heav'n's own voice

Condemn impiety!

FLORIAN

Hear heav'n's own voice

Condemn imposture!

EDMUND

Here end your dispute.

The storm comes on.

MARTIN

Yes, you do well to check

Your comrade's profanation, lest swift justice

O'ertake his guilt, and stamp his doom in thunder.

FLORIAN

Father, art thou so read in languages

Thou canst interpret th' inarticulate

And quarreling elements? What says the storm?

Pronounces it for thee or me? Do none

Dispute within the compass of its bolt

But we? Is the same loud-voic'd oracle

Definitive for fifty various brawls?

Or but a shock of clouds to all but us?

What if two drunkards at this instant hour

Contend for preference of taste, one ranking

The vines of Burgundy before the juice

186 THE MYSTERIOUS MOTHER [ACT II

That dances in a foam of brilliant bubbles  
From Champagne's berries, think'st thou thunder  
speaks  
In favour of the white or ruby grape?

MARTIN

What mockery! I resign thee to thy fate— [*Going.*  
[*The ORPHAN CHILDREN run in terrified.*

FIRST ORPHAN

O father, save us! save us! holy father.

MARTIN

What means this panic?

FIRST ORPHAN

Oh! a storm so dreadful!  
Some demon rides in th' air.

MARTIN

Undoubtedly.  
Could you distinguish ought?

FIRST ORPHAN

I fell to earth,  
And said the pray'r you taught me against spectres.

MARTIN

'Twas well—but none of you, had none the courage  
To face the fiend?

SECOND ORPHAN

I wink'd, and saw the light'ning  
Burst on the monument. The shield of arms

Shiver'd to splinters. E'er I could repeat  
An Ave-Mary, down with hideous crash  
The cross came tumbling—then I fled—

MARTIN

Retire;

This is unholy ground. Acquaint the Countess.  
I will not tarry long.—[*ex. Children.*] Thou mouth  
accurst, [To FLORIAN.  
Repent, and tremble! Wherefore hast thou drawn  
On Narbonne's plains, already visited  
By long calamity, new storms of horror?  
The seasons change their course; th' afflicted hind  
Bewails his blasted harvest. Meteors ride  
The troubled sky, and chase the darken'd sun.  
Heav'n vindicates its altars: tongues licentious  
Have scoff'd our holy rites, and hidden sins  
Have forc'd th' offended elements to borrow  
Tremendous organs! Sixteen fatal years  
Has Narbonne's province groan'd beneath the hand  
Of desolation—for what crimes we know not!  
To edge suspended vengeance art thou come?

EDMUND, *preventing* FLORIAN

My friend, reply not—Father, I lament  
This casual jarring—let us crave your pardon.  
I feel your country's woes: I lov'd Count Edmund:  
Revere his father's ashes. I will visit  
The ruin'd monument—and at your leisure  
Could with some conf'rence with you.

MARTIN

(This is well:

[*aside.*



I almost had forgotten)—Be it so.  
Where is your haunt?

EDMUND

A mile without the town:  
Hard by St. Bridget's nunnery.

MARTIN

There expect me.

*Aside.*] (I must to Benedict)—Heav'n's peace be  
with you. *[Exeunt.*

### SCENE III

COUNTESS, PORTER

PORTER

Return, my gracious lady. Tho' the storm  
Abates his clamours, yonder angry clouds  
Are big with spouting fires—do not go forth.

COUNTESS

Wretches like me, good Peter, dread no storms.  
'Tis delicate Felicity that shrinks,  
When rocking winds are loud, and wraps itself  
Insultingly in comfortable furs,  
Thinking how many naked objects want  
Like shelter and security. Do thou  
Return; I'll seek the monument alone.

PORTER

No, my good lady; never be it said  
That faithfull Peter his dear mistress left  
Expos'd to tempests. These thin-sprinkled hairs

Cannot hold long. If in your service shed,  
'Twere a just debt—hark! sure I heard a groan!  
Pray, let us in again—

COUNTESS

My honest servant,  
Thy fear o'er-pow'rs thy love. I heard no groan;  
Nor could it 'scape a sense so quick as mine  
At catching misery's expressive note:  
'Tis my soul's proper language.—Injur'd shade!  
Shade of my Narbonne! if thy scornfull spirit  
Rode in yon whirlwind, and impell'd its bolt  
Implacable! indignant! 'gainst the cross  
Rais'd by thy wretched wife—behold she comes  
A voluntary victim! Re-assemble  
Thy light'nings, and accept her destin'd head.

PORTER

For pity! gracious dame, what words are these!  
In any mouth less holy they would seem  
A magic incantation. Goblins rise  
At sounds less pow'rfull. Last year's 'clipse fell out,  
Because your maidens cross'd a gypsy's palm  
To know what was become of Beatrice.

COUNTESS

And didst thou dare inform them where she dwells?

PORTER

No, on my duty—true; they think I know;  
And so thinks Benedict, your confessor.  
He says, she could not pass the castle gates  
Without my privity—Well! I had a task

To say him nay. The honour of my keys,  
 My office was at stake. No, father, said I,  
 None pass the drawbridge without Peter's knowledge.  
 How then to beat him from his point?—I had it—  
 Who knows, quoth I, but sudden malady  
 Took off the damsel? She might, or might not  
 Have sepulture within the castle-walls—

COUNTESS

Peace, fool—and thus thy shrewd equivocation  
 Has stain'd my name with murder's foul suspicion!  
 —O peace of virtue! thy true votaries  
 Quail not with ev'ry blast! I cloak my guilt!  
 Things foreign rise and load me with their blackness.  
 Erroneous imputation must be borne;  
 Lest, while unravelling the knotty web,  
 I lend a clue may vibrate to my heart.  
 —But who comes here?—retire we and observe.  
*[They withdraw.]*

SCENE IV

FLORIAN, COUNTESS, PORTER

FLORIAN

'Tis not far off the time the Porter will'd me  
 Expect him here. My friend, indulging grief,  
 Chose no companion of his pensive walk.  
 Yes, I must serve thee. May my prosp'rous care  
 Restore thee to thy state, and aid thy love  
 To make the blooming Adeliza thine!

COUNTESS, *apart to the* PORTER  
Methought he spoke of love and Adeliza.  
Who may it be?

PORTER  
I never heard his name?

COUNTESS *approaching*  
Stranger, did chance or purpose guide thy steps  
To this lone dwelling?

[PORTER *makes signs to* FLORIAN *not to discover*  
*their former interview.*

FLORIAN  
Pardon, gentle lady,  
If curious to behold the pious matron  
Whom Narbonne's plains obey, I sought this castle,  
And deem my wish indulg'd in viewing thee.

COUNTESS  
Me! stranger. Is affliction then so rare  
It occupies the babbler Fame?—Oh! no.  
My sorrows are not new. Austerities  
And rigid penance tempt no curious eyes.  
Nor speaks your air desire of searching out  
The house of mourning. Rather should you seek  
Some unsunn'd beauty, some unpractic'd fair one,  
Who thinks the first soft sounds she hears, are love.  
There may be such at Narbonne: none dwell here,  
But melancholy, sorrow, and contrition.

FLORIAN  
Pleasure has charms; but so has virtue too.  
One skims the surface, like the swallow's wing,

And scuds away unnotic'd. T'other nymph,  
Like spotless swans in solemn majesty,  
Breasts the full surge, and leaves long light behind.

COUNTESS

Your courtly phrase, young knight, bespeaks a birth  
Above the vulgar. May I ask, how old  
Your residence in Narbonne? Whence your race?

FLORIAN

In Brabant was I born: my father's name,  
The Baron of St. Orme. I wait at Narbonne  
My letters of exchange, while passing homewards  
To gather my late sire's no mean succession.

COUNTESS

Dead is your father! and unwet your cheek!  
Trust me, young sir, a father's guardian arm  
Were well worth all the treasures it withheld.  
A mother might be spar'd.

FLORIAN

Mothers, like thee,  
Were blessings.

COUNTESS

Curses!

PORTER

Lady, 'tis the hour  
Of pray'r. Shall I ring out the chapel bell?

COUNTESS

Stranger, I'm summon'd hence. Within these walls  
I may not speak with thee: my solemn purpose



Admits no converse with unsteady youth.  
But at St. Bridget's nunnery, to-morrow,  
If you can spare some moments from your pastime,  
In presence of the abbess, I would talk with thee.

FLORIAN

Madam, I shall not fail.

COUNTESS

Good angels guard thee!

[*Ex. COUNTESS and PORTER.*]

## SCENE V

FLORIAN *alone*

So, this is well, my introduction made,  
It follows that I move her for her son.  
She seems of gentler mould than fame bespoke her.  
Nor wears her eye the sawcy superiority  
Of bigot pride. Who knows but she may wish  
To shake the trammels of enthusiasm off,  
And reconcile herself to easier paths  
Of simple goodness? Women oft wear the mask  
Of piety to draw respect, or hide  
The loss of it. When age dispells the train  
That waits on beauty, then religion blows  
Her trumpet, and invites another circle;  
Who, full as false as the preceding crew,  
Flatter her problematic mental charms:  
While snuffing incense, and devoutly wanton,  
The Pagan goddess grows a Christian saint,

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And keeps her patent of divinity.

Well! Edmund, whatsoe'er thy mother be,

I'll put her virtue or hypocrisy

To the severest test.—Countess, expect me! [*Exit.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT

ACT the THIRD

SCENE I

*A small garden within the castle, terminated by a long cloyster, beyond which appear some towers.*

COUNTESS *alone*

The monument destroy'd!—Well! what of that!  
 Were ev'ry thunderbolt address'd to me,  
 Not one would miss me. Fate's unerring hand  
 Darts not at random. Nor, as fractious children  
 Are chid by proxy, does it deal its wrath  
 On stocks and stones to frighten, not chastise us.  
 Omens and prodigies are but begotten  
 By guilt on pride. We know the doom we merit;  
 And self-importance makes us think all nature  
 Busied to warn us when that doom approaches.  
 Fie! fie! I blush to recollect my weakness.  
 My Edmund may be dead: the house of Narbonne  
 May perish from this earth: poor Adeliza  
 May taste the cup of woe that I have drug'd:  
 But light'nings play not to announce our fate:  
 No whirlwinds rise to prophecy to mites:  
 Nor, like inquisitors, does heav'n dress up  
 In flames the victims it intends to punish;  
 Making a holiday for greater sinners.  
 —Greater! oh! impious! Were the faggots plac'd  
 Around me, and the fatal torch applied,  
 What wretch could view the dreadfull apparatus,

And be a blacker criminal than I am?  
 —Perhaps my virtues but enhance my guilt.  
 Penance attracts respect, and not reproach.  
 How dare I be esteem'd? Be known my crimes!  
 Let shame anticipate the woes to come!  
 —Ha! monster! wouldst disclose the frightfull scene?  
 Would'st teach the vicious world unheard-of sins,  
 And be a new apostle of perdition?  
 —My Edmund too! has not a mother's hand  
 Afflicted him enough? shall this curs'd tongue  
 Brand him with shame indelible, and sting  
 His honest bosom with his mother's scorpions?  
 Shall Adeliza hear the last of horrors,  
 E'er her pure breast, that sighs for sins it knows not,  
 Has learn'd the rudiments of human frailty?  
 No, hapless maid—

*Enter a SERVANT*

SERVANT

Madam, young Adeliza  
 Intreats to speak with you. The lady abbess  
 Sickens to death.

COUNTESS

Admit her.—Now, my soul,

[*Exit SERVANT.*

Recall thy calm; support alone thy torments;  
 And envy not the peace thou ne'er must know.

SCENE II

COUNTESS, ADELIZA

COUNTESS

Approach, sweet maid. Thy melancholy mien  
Speaks thy compassionate and feeling heart.  
'Tis a grave lesson for thy blooming years,  
A scene of dissolution! But when Death  
Expands his pinions o'er a bed so holy,  
Sure he's a welcome guest.

ADELIZA

Oh! do not doubt it,  
The pious matron meets him like a friend  
Expected long. And if a tender tear,  
At leaving your poor ward, melts in her eye,  
And downward sinks its fervent ecstasy;  
Still does impatience to be gone, betray  
Her inward satisfaction. Yesternight,  
As weeping, praying, by her couch I knelt,  
Behold, my Adeliza, mark, she said,  
How happy the death-bed of innocence!  
Oh! lady, how those sounds affected me!  
I wish'd to die with her—and oh! forgive me,  
If in that moment I forgot my patroness!

COUNTESS

It was a wish devout. Can that want pardon?  
But to confess it, speaks thy native candour.  
Thy virtuous, thy ingenuous truth disdains  
To hide a thought—



ADELIZA, *falling at her feet*

Oh! can I hear this praise,  
And not expire in blushes at thy feet?

COUNTESS

What means this passion?

ADELIZA

Ah! recall thy words:  
Thy Adeliza merits no encomium.

COUNTESS

Thou art too modest. Praise is due to truth.  
Thou should'st not seek it; nor should I withhold it.

ADELIZA

For pity, spare me.—No, my honour'd mistress,  
I merit not—oh! no, my guilty heart  
Deserves thy frowns—I cannot speak—

COUNTESS

Be calm:  
Thou know'st no guilt. Unfold thy lab'ring breast.  
Say, am not I thy friend? Me canst thou fear?

ADELIZA

Can I fear ought beside? Fear ought but goodness?  
Has not thy lavish bounty cloath'd me, fed me?  
Hast thou not taught me virtue? Whom on earth,  
But such a benefactress, such a friend,  
Can Adeliza fear? Alas! she knows  
No other friend! and christian fortitude  
Dreads not a foe. Methinks I would have said  
That christian innocence—but shame restrain'd  
My conscious tongue—I am *not* innocent.

COUNTESS

Thou dearest orphan, to my bosom come,  
And vent thy little sorrows. Purity  
Like thine affrights itself with fancied guilt.  
I'll be thy confessor; and trust me, love,  
Thy penance will be light.

ADELIZA

In vain you chear me.

Say, what is guilt, but to have known a thought  
I blush'd to tell thee? To have lent mine ear,  
For three long weeks, to sounds I did not wish  
My patroness should hear! Ah! when till now  
Have I not hoped thy presence, thought it long,  
If two whole days detain'd thee from our mass.  
When have I wept, but when thou hast refus'd  
To let thy Adeliza call thee mother?  
I know I was not worthy of such honour,  
Too splendid for a child of charity.  
I now am most unworthy! I undone,  
Have not desir'd thy presence; have not thought it  
Long, if two days thou hast declin'd our mass:  
Other discourse than thine has charm'd mine ear;  
Nor dare I now presume to call thee mother!

COUNTESS

My lovely innocence, restrain thy tears.  
I know thy secret; know, why beats and throbs  
Thy little heart with unaccustom'd tumult.

ADELIZA

Impossible——Oh! let me tell thee all——

COUNTESS

No; I will tell it thee. Thou hast convers'd  
With a young knight—

ADELIZA

Amazement! Who inform'd thee?  
Pent in her chamber, sickness has detain'd  
Our Abbess from the parlour. There I saw him,  
Oft as he came alone.

COUNTESS

He talk'd of love;  
And woo'd thee for his bride.

ADELIZA

He did.

COUNTESS

( 'Tis well: [*aside.*  
This is the stranger I beheld this morning.)  
His father dead, he hastes to take possession  
Of his paternal fortunes—is't not so?

ADELIZA

He sorrows for a father—something too  
He utter'd of a large inheritance  
That should be his—in truth I mark'd it not.

COUNTESS

But when he spoke of love, thy very soul  
Hung on his lips. Say, canst thou not repeat  
Each word, each syllable? His accent too  
Thou notedst: still it rings upon thine ear.  
And then his eyes—they look'd such wond'rous truth;  
Art thou not sure he cannot have deceived thee?

ADELIZA

Alas! my noble mistress, thou dost mock  
Poor Adeliza—what can I reply!

COUNTESS

The truth. Thy words have ever held its language.  
Say, dost thou love this stranger? Hast thou pledg'd  
Thy faith to him?

ADELIZA

Angels forbid! What faith have I to give?  
Can I dispose of ought without thy leave?

COUNTESS

Insinuating softness!—still thou turnest  
Aside my question. Thou dost love this stranger.

ADELIZA

Yes, with such love as that I feel for thee.  
His virtues I revere: his earnest words  
Sound like the precepts of a tender parent:  
And, next to thee, methinks I could obey him.

COUNTESS

Ay, as his wife.

ADELIZA

Oh! never. What, to lose him,  
As thou thy Narbonne!

COUNTESS

Check not, Adeliza,  
Thy undevelop'd passion. Should this stranger  
Prove what my wish has form'd, and what his words  
Report him, it would bless my wofull days  
To see thee plac'd above the reach of want,  
And distant from this residence of sorrow.

ADELIZA

What! wouldst thou send me from thee! oh! for pity!  
 I cannot, will not leave thee. If thy goodness  
 Withdraws its bounty, at thy castle-gate  
 I'll wait and beg those alms thy gracious hand  
 To none refuses. I shall see thee pass,  
 And, pass'd, will kiss thy footsteps—wilt thou spurn  
 me?

Well then, I'll die, and bless thee—Oh! this stranger!  
 'Tis he has done this; he has drawn thy anger  
 On thy poor ward!—I'll never see him more.

COUNTESS

Be calm, my lovely orphan; hush thy fears.  
 Heav'n knows how fondly, anxiously I love thee!  
 The stranger's not to blame. Myself will task him,  
 And know if he deserves thee. Now retire,  
 Nor slack thy duty to th' expiring saint.  
 A lover must not weigh against a friend.

[*Ex. ADELIZA.*]

And lo! where comes the friar. 'Twere not fit  
 He knew my purpose. Benedict, I fear,  
 Has views on this side heav'n.

## SCENE III

COUNTESS, BENEDICT

BENEDICT

The dew of grace  
 Rest on this dwelling!



COUNTESS

Thanks, my ghostly friend.  
But sure, or I mistake, in your sad eye  
I spell affliction's signature. What woes  
Call for the scanty balm this hand can pour?

BENEDICT

You, lady, and you only need that balm.

COUNTESS

To tutor my unapt and ill-school'd nature  
You come then—Good, my confessor, a truce  
With doctrines and authority. If ought  
Can medicate a soul unsound like mine,  
Good deeds must operate the healthfull change,  
And penance cleanse it to receive the blessing.  
Shall I for faith, shall I, for but believing  
What 'tis my int'rest to believe, efface  
The stains, which, tho' believing, I contracted?

BENEDICT

Lady, your subtle wit, like daring infants,  
Sports with a weight will crush it—but no more.  
It is not mine to argue, but pronounce.  
The church, on rock of adamant establish'd,  
*Now* inch by inch disputes not its domain.  
Heav'n's laws promulg'd, it rests obedience follow.  
And when supreme It taxes that obedience,  
Not at impracticable, vain perfection,  
But rates its prodigality of blessings  
At the slight credence of its pow'r to grant them;  
Shall man with stoic pride reject the boon,  
And cry, we will do more, we will deserve it?

## COUNTESS

Deserve it!—oh! have all your sainted hosts,  
 Your choirs of martyrs, or your clouds of cherubim,  
 Deserv'd to feel the transport but of hope?  
 Away; nor tell me of this holy juggle  
 'Twixt faith and conscience. Shall the latter roam,  
 Wasting and spoiling with a ruffian hand,  
 While her accomplice faith, wrapt up at home  
 In proud security of self-existence,  
 Thinks that existence shall absolve them both?

## BENEDICT

'Twas not to war with words, so heaven's my judge,  
 That your poor-rated servant sought your presence.  
 I came with charitable friendly purpose  
 To sooth—but wherefore mitigate your griefs?  
 You mock my friendship, and miscall my zeal.  
 Since then to council, comfort, and reproof  
 Obdurate—learn the measure of your woes.  
 Learn, if the mother's fortitude can brave  
 The bolt the woman's arrogance defied.

## COUNTESS

The mother, said'st thou?

## BENEDICT

Yes, imperious dame:  
 Yes, 'twas no vision rais'd by dreams and fumes,  
 Begot 'twixt nightly fear and indigestion:  
 Nor was it artifice and pious fraud,  
 When but this morning I announc'd thy Edmund  
 Was number'd with the dead—

COUNTESS

Priest, mock me not!  
Nor dally with a mother's apprehension.  
Lives, or lives not my son?

BENEDICT

Woman, heav'n mocks thee!  
On Buda's plain thy slaughter'd Edmund lies.  
An unbeliever's weapon cleft his heart;  
But 'twas thy unbelief that pois'd the shaft,  
And sped its aim.

COUNTESS

To heav'n's high will I bow me.  
Oh! may its joys be open to his soul,  
Tho' clos'd to mine for ever!

BENEDICT

Then you lov'd him!

COUNTESS

Lov'd him!—oh! nature, bleeding at my heart,  
Hearest thou this? Lov'd him!—ha!—whither!—  
    rage,  
Be dumb—Now, listen, monk, nor dare reply  
Beyond my purpose. In the grave, thou say'st,  
My Edmund sleeps—how didst thou learn his fate?

BENEDICT

No angel whisper'd it; no dæmon spoke it.  
Thou, by the self-same means I learn'd, may'st  
    learn it.

COUNTESS

Be brief.

BENEDICT

Then—but what boots his life or death  
To a poor taunted friar—Benedict,  
Leave this proud mistress of the fleeting hour,  
E'er the destroying angel's kindling brand  
Smokes in the tow'rs of Narbonne—

COUNTESS

Hold! presumptuous!  
I am thy mistress yet: nor will I brook  
Such insolent reproof. Produce thy warrant,  
Assure my Edmund's death—or dread his vengeance!  
Severely shall he question ev'ry throb  
His agonizing mother now endures.

BENEDICT

My warrant is at hand—

[*Goes out and returns with EDMUND.*

This gentleman

Beheld thy Edmund breathless on the ground.

COUNTESS

Hah! is this sorcery? or is't my husband? [*Swoons.*

EDMUND

Stand off, and let me clasp her in my arms!  
The flame of filial fondness shall revive  
The lamp of life, repay the breath she gave,  
And waken all the mother in her soul.

BENEDICT

Ha! who art thou then?

EDMUND

Do not my fears tell thee!

Look up! O ever dear! behold thy son!

It is thy Edmund's voice; blest, if thy eyes

Awake to bless him—Soft! her pulse returns;

She breathes—oh! speak. Dear parent, mother, hear!

'Tis Edmund—Friar, wherefore is this horror?

Am I then deadly to her eyes?—Dumb still!

Speak, tho' it be to curse me—I have kill'd her!

My brain grows hot—

BENEDICT

My lord, restrain your passion;

See! she revives—

EDMUND

Oh! if these lips that quiver

With dread of thy disdain, have force to move thee,

With nature's, duty's, or affection's voice,

Feel how I print thy hand with burning zeal,

Tho' tortur'd at this awful interval!

Art thou, or not, a mother?

COUNTESS

Hah! where am I?

Why do you hold me? Was it not my Narbonne?

I saw him—on my soul I did—

EDMUND

Alas!

She raves—recall thy wand'ring apprehension—

It was no phantom: at thy feet behold—



COUNTESS

Hah; whom! quick, answer—Narbonne, dost thou live?

Or comest to transport me to perdition?

BENEDICT

Madam, behold your son: he kneels for pardon.

And I, I innocent, I ignorant

Of what he was, implore it too—

COUNTESS

Distraction!

What means this complicated scene of horrors?

Why thus assail my splitting brain?—be quick—

Art thou my husband wing'd from other orbs

To taunt my soul? What is this dubious form,

Impress'd with ev'ry feature I adore,

And every lineament I dread to look on!

Art thou my dead or living son?

EDMUND

I am.

Thy living Edmund. Let these scalding tears

Attest th' existence of thy suff'ring son.

COUNTESS

Ah! touch me not—

EDMUND

How!—in that cruel breast

Revive then all sensations, but affection?

Why so ador'd the memory of the father,

And so abhorr'd the presence of the son?

But now, and to thy eyes I seem'd my father—

At least for that resemblance-sake embrace me.

COUNTESS

Horror on horror! blasted be thy tongue!  
What sounds are these?

BENEDICT

Lady, tho' I excuse not  
This young lord's disobedience, his contrition  
Bespeaks no rebel principle. I doubt not,  
Your blessing first obtain'd and gracious pardon,  
But soon as morning streaks the ruddy East,  
He will obey your pleasure, and return  
To stranger climes—

EDMUND

'Tis false; I will not hence.  
I have been fool'd too long, too long been patient.  
Nor are my years so green as to endure  
The manacles of priests and nurseries.  
Am I not Narbonne's prince? who shall rule here  
But Narbonne? Have I sapp'd my country's laws,  
Or play'd the tyrant? Who shall banish me?  
Am I a recreant knight? Has cowardice  
Disgrac'd the line of heroes I am sprung from?  
Shall I then skulk, hide my inglorious head?  
Or does it please your worship's gravity  
Dispatch me on some sleeveless pilgrimage,  
Like other noble fools, to win you empires;  
While you at home mock our credulity,  
The masters of our wealth, our states, and wives?

COUNTESS *aside*

(Brave youth! there spoke his sire. How my soul  
yearns

To own its genuine offspring!—Edmund, hear me!  
 Thou art my son, and I will prove a mother.  
 But I'm thy sovereign too. This state is mine.  
 Learn to command, by learning to obey.  
 Tho' frail my sex, I have a soul as masculine  
 As any of thy race. This very monk,  
 Lord as thou thinkest of my ductile conscience,  
 Quails—look if 'tis not true—when I command.  
 Retire thee to the village. 'Tis not ripe  
 As yet my purpose—Benedict, attend me.  
 To-morrow, Edmund, shalt thou learn my pleasure.  
 [*Exit* COUNTESS and BENEDICT.]

EDMUND *alone*

Why, this *is* majesty. Sounds of such accent  
 Ne'er struck mine ear till now. Commanding sex!  
 Strength, courage, all our boasted attributes,  
 Want estimation; ev'n the preheminance  
 We vaunt in wisdom, seems a borrow'd ray,  
 When virtue deigns to speak with female organs.  
 Yes, O my mother, I *will* learn t' obey:  
 I *will* believe, that, harsh as thy decrees,  
 They wear the warrant of benign intention.  
 Make but the blooming Adeliza mine,  
 And bear, of me unquestion'd, Narbonne's sceptre;  
 Till life's expiring lamp by intervals  
 Throws but a fainter and a fainter flash,  
 And then relumes its wasted oil no more. [*Exit.*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT

ACT the FOURTH

*The SCENE continues*

BENEDICT, MARTIN

MARTIN

I know thy spirit well; know how it labours,  
When curb'd and driv'n to wear the mask of art.  
But till this hour I have not seen thy passions  
Boil o'er the bounds of prudence. So impetuous,  
And so reserv'd!

BENEDICT

Mistake me not, good brother:

I want no confidence: I know thy faith.  
But can I to thy naked eye unfold,  
What I dare scarce reveal to my own bosom?  
I would not know one half that I suspect,  
Till I have acted as if not suspecting.

MARTIN

How, brother! thou a casuist! and apply  
To thy own breast those damning subtleties,  
Which cowards with half-winking consciences  
Purchase of us, when they would sin secure,  
And hope the penalty will all be ours!

BENEDICT

Brother, this moment is too big with action  
To waste on bootless curiosity.  
Why I try sins upon the touchstone conscience,

It is for others use, not for my own.  
 'Tis time enough to make up our account,  
 When we confess and kneel for absolution.

MARTIN

Still does thy genius soar above mankind!  
 How many fathers of our holy church  
 In Benediçt I view!

BENEDICT

No flattery, brother.  
 'Tis true the church owes Benediçt some thanks.  
 For her, I have forgot I am a man.  
 For her, each virtue from my breast I banish.  
 No laws I know but her prosperity;  
 No country, but her boundless acquisitions.  
 Who dares be true to country, king, or friend,  
 If enemies to Rome, are Benediçt's foes.

MARTIN

Has it then gone so far? Does she speak out?  
 Is Edmund too infected with like errors?

BENEDICT

Both, brother, both are thinking heretics.  
 I could forgive them, did some upstart sect  
 With sharper rigours charm their headlong zeal.  
 But they, in sooth, must *reason*—curses light  
 On the proud talent! 'twill at last undo us.  
 When men are gorged with each absurdity  
 Their subtle wits can frame, or we adopt;  
 For very novelty they will fly to sense,  
 And we shall fall before that idol, fashion.



MARTIN

Fear not a reign so transient. Statesmen too  
 Will join to stem the torrent: or new follies  
 Replace the old. Each chieftain that attacks us  
 Must grow the pope of his own heresy.  
 E'en stern philosophy, if once triumphant,  
 Shall frame some jargon, and exact obedience  
 To metaphysic nonsense worse than ours.  
 The church is but a specious name for empire,  
 And will exist wherever fools have fears.  
 Rome is no city; 'tis the human heart;  
 And there suffice it if we plant our banners.  
 Each priest cannot command—and thence come sects.  
 Obdurate Zeno and our great Ignatius  
 Are of one faith, and differ but for power.

BENEDICT

So be it—therefore interest bids us crush  
 This cockatrice and her egg: or we shall see  
 The singing saints of Savoy's neighb'ring vale  
 Fly to the covert of her shadowy wings,  
 And foil us at our own dexterity.  
 Already to those vagrants she inclines;  
 As if the rogues, that preach reform to others,  
 Like idiots, minded to reform themselves.

MARTIN

Be cautious, brother: you may lose the lady.

BENEDICT

She is already lost—or ne'er was ours.  
 I cannot dupe, and therefore must destroy her:

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Involve her house in ruin so prodigious,  
That neither she nor Edmund may survive it.

MARTIN

How may this be accomplish'd?

BENEDICT

Ask me not.

From hints long treasur'd up, from broken phrase  
In phrenzy dropp'd, but vibrating from truth:  
Nay, from her caution to explain away,  
What the late tempest of her soul had utter'd,  
I guess her fatal secret—or, no matter—  
Say, I do not—by what she has forbidden,  
I know what should be done—then haste thee,  
brother;  
Facilitate Count Edmund's interview  
With Adeliza; nourish their young passion—  
Curse them—and if you can—why—join their hands.

MARTIN

I tremble!

BENEDICT

Dastard, tremble, if we fail.

What can we fear, when we have ruin'd them?

[*A deep-toned Voice is heard.*] Forbear!

BENEDICT

Ha! whence that sound!

[*Voice again.*] Forbear!

BENEDICT

Again!

Comes it from heav'n or hell?

[*Voice again.*] Forbear!

MARTIN

Good angels,

Protect me!—Benedict, thy unholy purpose—

## SCENE II

BENEDICT, MARTIN, ADELIZA, FRIARS

[*A procession of friars, chanting a funeral anthem, and followed by ADELIZA, advance slowly from a cloyster at the end of the stage.*

THE ANTHEM

Forbear! forbear! forbear!

The pious are heav'n's care.

Lamentations ill become us,

When the good are ravish'd from us.

The pangs of death but smooth the way

To visions of eternal day.

BENEDICT, *aside to* MARTIN

Now, man of aspin conscience! lo! the gods,

That sentence Benedict's unholy purpose!

Art thou a priest? Wast thou initiated

In each fond mummary that subdues the vulgar,

And standest thou appall'd at our own thunders?

MARTIN

Who trembled first? It was thy guilty conscience

That gave th' alarm to mine.

BENEDICT

Peace, dotard, peace!  
 Nor when the lamb is nigh, must eagles wrangle.  
 Fair saint, give us to know why flow these tears;

[To ADELIZA.

Why sighs that gentle bosom; and why chant ye  
 That heav'n-invoking soul-dissolving dirge?

ADELIZA

Ah! holy father, art thou then to learn  
 The pious Abbess is at peace? We go  
 To bear her parting blessing to the Countess.

BENEDICT

It must not be. Occasions of much import  
 Engross her faculties. By me she wills you  
 Restrain your steps within the cloysters pale,  
 Nor grant access but to one stranger knight.

ADELIZA

Is't possible? Can my dear mistress bar  
 Her faithful handmaid from her gracious presence?  
 Shall I not pour my sorrows in her bosom,  
 And moisten it with grief and gratitude?  
 Two friends were all poor Adeliza's wealth.  
 Lo! one is gone to plead the orphan's cause.  
 My patroness, like Tobit's guardian spirit,  
 Confirms my steps, and points to realms of glory.  
 She will not quit me in this vale of bondage;  
 She must be good, who teaches what is goodness.

BENEDICT

(Indeed! my pretty prattler!—then am I [aside.  
 As sound a saint as e'er the rubric boasted.

—Ha! 'tis the Countess—now for my obedience.)

Young lady, much I marvel at these murmurs.

[*To* ADELIZA.

Just sense and sober piety still dictate

The Countess's commands. With truth I say it,

My sins diminish, as I copy her.

### SCENE III

COUNTESS, ADELIZA, BENEDICT, MARTIN

COUNTESS

What voices heard I? Does my rebel son

Attempt against my peace?—Hah! Adeliza!

I charg'd thee guard thy convent—wherefore then

This disobedience?

BENEDICT

Madam, I was urging

The fitness of your orders; but vain youth

Scoff'd my importunate rebuke—

ADELIZA

Oh! no.

I am the thing you made me. Crush me, spurn me,

I will not murmur. Should you bid me die,

I know 'twere meant in kindness.

COUNTESS

Bid *thee* die!

My own detested life but lingers round thee!

Ha! what a glance was there! it spoke resemblance



To all I hate, adore—My child, retire:  
I am much discompos'd—the good old Abbess  
Claims thy attendance.

ADELIZA

Mercy crown her soul!  
She needs no duty we can pay her now!

COUNTESS

How! art thou desolate! not a friend left  
To guard thy innocence?—Oh! wretched maid!  
Must thou be left to spoilers? or worse, worse,  
To the fierce onset of thy own dire passions?  
Oh! is it come to this?

ADELIZA

My noble mistress,  
Can Adeliza want a ministering angel,  
When shelter'd by thy wing?—yet Benedict  
Says, I must shun this hospitable roof.  
Indeed I thought it hard.

COUNTESS

Did Benedict,  
Did he audacious dare forbid my child,  
My little orphan to embrace her—curses  
Swell in my throat—hence—or they fall on thee.

ADELIZA

Alas! for pity! how have I offended?

BENEDICT

Madam, it is the pupil of your care,  
Your favour'd child—

COUNTESS

Who told thee so? Be dumb  
For ever—What art thou combin'd with Edmund,  
To dash me down the precipice? Churchman, I tell  
thee,

I view it with impatience. I could leap  
And meet the furies—but must *she* fall with me!

BENEDICT

(Yes, and thy Edmund too) [*Aside.*] Be patient,  
lady:

This fair domain, thou know'st, acknowledges  
The sovereignty of the church. Thy rebel son  
Dares not attempt—

COUNTESS

Again I bid thee peace.  
There is no question of lord Edmund. Leave us:  
I have to talk with her alone.

BENEDICT

(Now tremble [*Aside to MARTIN.*  
At voices supernatural; and forfeit  
The spoils the tempest throws into our lap.)  
[*Exeunt BENEDICT and MARTIN.*

#### SCENE IV

COUNTESS, ADELIZA

COUNTESS

Now, Adeliza, summon all thy courage,  
Retrace my precepts past: nor let a tear

Profane a moment that's worth martyrdom.  
 Remember patience is the christian's courage.  
 Stoics have bled, and demigods have died.  
 A christian's task is harder—'tis to suffer.

## ADELIZA

Alas! have I not learnt the bitter lesson?  
 Have I not borne *thy* woes? What is to come  
 Can tax my patience with a ruder trial?

## COUNTESS

Oh! yes, thou must do more. Adversity  
 Has various arrows. When the soul is steel'd  
 By meditation to encounter sorrow,  
 The foe of man shifts his artillery,  
 And drowns in luxury and careless softness  
 The breast he could not storm. Canst thou bear  
     wealth,  
 And pleasure's melting couch? Thou hast known  
     virtue  
 But at a scanty board. She has awak'd thee  
 To chilling vapours in the midnight vault,  
 And beckon'd thee to hardships, tears, and penance.  
 Wilt thou acknowledge the divine instructress,  
 When syren pleasures lap thee in delights?

## ADELIZA

If such the witchery that waits on guilt,  
 Why should I seek th' enchantress and her wiles?  
 The virgin veil shall guard my spotless hours,  
 Assure my peace, and saint me for hereafter.

COUNTESS

It cannot be—  
To Narbonne thou must bid a last adieu!  
And with the stranger knight depart a bride.

ADELIZA

Unhappy me! too sure I have o'erburthen'd  
Thy charity, if thou would'st drive me from thee.  
Restrain thy alms, dear lady. I have learnt  
From our kind sister-hood the needle's art.  
My needle and thy smiles will life support.  
Pray let me bring my last embroidery;  
'Tis all by my own hand. Indeed I meant it  
For my kind lady's festival.

COUNTESS

Great justice!

Does this stroke pierce not deep enough? These  
tears,  
Wrung from my vital fondness, scald they not  
Worse than the living coal that sears the limbs?

ADELIZA

Alas! thou hearest not! What grief o'erwhelms thee?  
Why darts thy eye into my inmost soul?  
Then vacant, motionless, arrests its course,  
And seems not to perceive what it reads there?  
My much-lov'd patroness!

COUNTESS

O Adeliza,

Thy words now slake, and now augment my fever!  
But oh! ere reason quits this lab'ring frame,  
While I dare weep these tears of anguish o'er thee,

Unutterable, petrifying anguish!  
 Hear my last breath. Avoid the scorpion pleasure.  
 Death lurks beneath the velvet of his lip,  
 And but to think him over, is perdition!  
 —O retrospect of horror!—To the altar!  
 Haste, Adeliza,—vow thou wilt be wretched!

ADELIZA

Dost thou then doom me to eternal sorrows?  
 Hast thou deceiv'd me? is not virtue, happiness!

COUNTESS

I know not that. I know that guilt is torture.

ADELIZA

Sure pestilence has flapp'd his balefull wing,  
 And shed its poison o'er thy saint-like reason!  
 When thou so patient, holy, so resign'd,  
 Doubtest of virtue's health, of virtue's peace.  
 —But 'tis to try me—look upon this relick:  
 'Twas the good Abbess's bequest. 'Twill chase  
 The fiend that walks at twilight.

COUNTESS

How she melts me!

What have I said—my lovely innocence,  
 Thou art my only thought—oh! wast thou form'd  
 The child of sin?—and dare I not embrace thee?  
 Must I with eager ecstasy gaze on thee,  
 Yet curse the hour that stamp'd thee with a being!

ADELIZA

Alas! was I then born the child of sin!  
 Who were my parents? I will pray for them.



COUNTRESS

Oh! if the bolt must come, here let it strike me!

*[Flinging herself on the ground.]*

Nature! these feelings were thy gift. Thou knowest  
How ill I can resist thy forcefull impulse.

If these emotions are imputed to me,  
I have one sin I cannot yet repent of!

ADELIZA

Oh! raise thee from the earth. Shall I behold thee  
Prostrate, embracing an unfriended beggar?  
Or dost thou mock me still? What is my lot?  
Wilt thou yet cherish me? Or do the great  
Exalt us but in sport, lend us a taste,  
A vision of enjoyment, and then dash us  
To poverty, more poignant by comparison?  
Sure *I* could never wanton with affliction!

COUNTRESS

Ah! canst thou doubt this conflict of the soul!  
Mock thee!—oh! yes, there are such savage natures,  
That will deride thy woes—and thou must bear it—  
With foul reproach will gall thy spotless soul,  
And taunt thee with a crime past thy conceiving.  
Oh! 'tis to shield thee from this world of sorrows,  
That thou must fly, must wed, must never view  
The tow'rs of Narbonne more; must never know  
The doom reserv'd for thy sad patroness!

ADELIZA

Who threatens thy dear life! recall thy son.  
His valiant arm will stem a host of foes,  
Replace thy lord, and woo thee to be happy.

COUNTESS

Hah! little imp of darkness! dost thou wear  
That angel form to gird me with upbraidings!  
Fly, ere my rage forget distinction, nature,  
And make a medley of unheard-of crimes.  
Fly, ere it be too late—

ADELIZA

For pity!

COUNTESS

Hence!

Pity would bid me stab thee, while the charm  
Of ignorance locks thee in its happy slumbers.

ADELIZA

Alas! she raves—I will call help.

[*Exit.*]

COUNTESS *alone*

[*After a long pause, in which she looks tenderly after*

ADELIZA.

She's gone.

—That pang, great God, was my last sacrifice!  
Now recollect thyself, my soul! consummate  
The pomp of horror, with tremendous coolness.  
'Tis fit that reason punish passion's crime.  
—Reason!—alas! 'tis one of my convulsions!  
Now it empow'rs me past myself: now leaves me  
Exhausted, spiritless, eying with despair  
The heights I cannot reach. Then madness comes,  
Imperial fool! and promises to waft me  
Beyond the grin of scorn—but who sits there,  
Supereminent?—'tis conscience!—phrenzy shield me!  
I know the foe—see! see! he points his lance!

He plunges it all flaming in my soul,  
And down I sink, lost in eternal anguish!

[*runs out.*

## SCENE V

BENEDICT, ADELIZA

ADELIZA

She is not here. Shall we not follow her?  
Such agonies of passion! sure some dæmon  
Assaults her. Thou shalt pray by her. Indeed  
I tremble for her life.

BENEDICT

Thou know'st her not.

Her transport is fictitious. 'Tis the coinage  
Of avarice and caprice. Dost thou not see  
Her bounty wearies? While thy babbling years  
Wore the trick of novelty, thou wast her plaything.  
The charity of the great must be amus'd.  
Mere merit surfeits it; affliction kills it.  
The sick must jest and gambol to attract  
Their pity—Come, I'll warrant, thou hast wept,  
And told her heav'n will register each ducat  
Her piety had spar'd to cloathe and feed thee.  
Go to; thou hast estrang'd her; and she means  
To drive thee hence, lest thou upbraid her change.

ADELIZA

Upbraid my patroness! I! I upbraid her,  
Who see her now the angel that she will be!

How knew I virtue, goodness, but from her!  
 Her lessons taught me heav'n; her life reveal'd it.  
 The wings of gratitude must bear me thither,  
 Or I deserve not Paradise.

BENEDICT

Thou art young.  
 Thy novice ear imbibes each silver sound,  
 And deems the music warbled all by truth.  
 Gray hairs are not fool'd thus. I know this Countess:  
 An errant heretic. She scoffs the church.  
 When did her piety adorn our altars?  
 What holy garments glisten with her gifts?  
 The fabric of our convent threatens ruin—  
 Does she repair it?—no. On lazy lepers,  
 On soldiers maim'd and swearing from the wars  
 She lavishes her wealth—but note it, young one;  
 Her days are number'd; and thou shalt do wisely  
 To quit her e'er the measure is complete.

ADELIZA

Alas! she bids me go. She bids me wed  
 The stranger knight that woo'd me at our parlour.

BENEDICT

And thou shalt take her at her word. Myself  
 Will join your hands—and lo! in happy hour  
 Who comes to meet her boon.

SCENE VI

EDMUND, BENEDICT, ADELIZA

EDMUND

In tears!—that cowl  
Shall not protect th' injurious tongue, that dares  
Insult thy innocence—for sure, thou dear one,  
Thou hast no sins to weep.

BENEDICT

My gracious lord,  
Yourself and virgin coyness must be chidden,  
If my fair scholar wears the mien of sadness.  
'Tis but a blush that melts in modest showers.

EDMUND

Unriddle, priest. My soul is too impatient  
To wait th' impertinence of flow'ry dialect.

BENEDICT

Then briefly thus. The Countess wills me join  
Your hand with this fair maiden's—now, my lord,  
Is my poor language nauseous?

EDMUND

Is it possible?  
Dost thou consent, sweet passion of my soul?  
May I then clasp thee to my heart?

ADELIZA

Forbear!  
It must not be—Thou shalt not wed a beggar.

EDMUND

A beggar! Thou art riches, opulence.  
The flaming ruby and the dazzling di'mond,



Set in the world's first diadem, could not add  
A ray to thy least charm—for pity, grant me  
To breathe my warmth into this marble hand.

ADELIZA

Never!——This orphan, this abandon'd wanderer  
Taunted with poverty, with shameful origine,  
Dower'd with no lot but scorn, shall ne'er bestow  
That, her sole portion, on a lordly husband.

BENEDICT

My lord, the Countess is my gracious mistress:  
My duty bade me to report her words.  
It seems her charities circumscribe her wishes.  
This goodly maiden has full long experienc'd  
Her amplest bounty. Other piteous objects  
Call for her largess. Lovely Adeliza  
Plac'd in your arms can never feel affliction.  
This the good Countess knows—

EDMUND

By my sire's soul

I will not thank her. Has she dar'd to scorn thee,  
Thou beauteous excellence?—then from this hour  
Thou art her equal. In her very presence  
I will espouse thee. Let us seek the proud one!  
—Nay, no resistance, love!

BENEDICT

(By heav'n all's lost, [*aside*.  
Should they meet now)——My lord, a word. The  
maiden [*aside to EDMUND*.  
Is tutor'd to such awe, she ne'er will yield

Consent, should but a frown dart from the Countess.  
But now, and she enjoin'd your marriage. Better  
Profit of that behest—

EDMUND

I tell thee, monk,  
My haughty soul will not—

BENEDICT

Pray be advis'd. [*in a low voice.*  
Heav'n knows how dear I tender your felicity.  
The chapel is few paces hence—nay, lead her  
With gentle wooings, nor alarm her fears.  
Arriv'd there, I will speedily pronounce  
The solemn words—

EDMUND

Well, be it so. My fair one,  
This holy man advises well. To heaven  
We will address our vows, and ask its pleasure.  
Come, come; I will not be refus'd—

ADELIZA

Yes, heav'n!  
To thee I fly; thou art my only refuge. [*Exeunt.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT

## ACT the FIFTH

*The SCENE continues**Enter BENEDICT*

The business is dispatch'd. Their hands are join'd.  
 The puling moppet struggled with her wishes;  
 Invok'd each saint to witness her refusal:  
 Nor heeded, tho' I swore their golden harps  
 Were tun'd to greet her hymeneal hour.  
 Th' impetuous Count, fired with th' impure sug-  
     gestion,  
 As if descending clouds had spread their pillows  
 To meet the pressure of his eager transports,  
 Would have forerun the rites. The maid affrighted  
 At such tumultuous unaccustom'd onset,  
 Sunk lifeless on the pavement. Hastily  
 I mumbled o'er the spell that binds them fast,  
 Like an invenom'd robe, to scorch each other  
 With mutual ruin——Thus am I reveng'd.  
 Proud dame of Narbonne, lo! a bare-foot monk  
 Thus pays thy scorn, thus vindicates his altars.  
 Nor while this woolen frock shall wrap our order,  
 Shall e'en the lillied monarchs of our realm  
 Be plac'd so high, but a poor friar's knife  
 Shall fell their tow'ring grandeur to the earth,  
 Oft as they scant obedience to the church.

SCENE II

BENEDICT, PORTER

PORTER

Ah! woe of woes! good father, haste thee in,  
And speak sweet words of comfort to our mistress,  
Her brain is much disturb'd—I fear some spell,  
Or naughty bev'rage—will you not in and pray by her?  
In sooth she needs your pray'rs.

BENEDICT

She scorns my pray'rs. *[coldly.]*

PORTER

Oh! no; but now she call'd for you. Pray seek her.

BENEDICT

I can administer no comfort to her.

PORTER

Yes, yes, you can. They say the soul fiend dreads  
A scholar—Tut, your holy wit can poze him,  
Or bind him to the red waves of the ocean.  
Oh! he afflicts her gentle spirit, and vomits  
Strange menaces and terrible from her mouth!  
Then he is sullen; gags her lab'ring lips,  
And she replies not—

BENEDICT

Goodman exorcist,  
Thy pains are unavailing. Her sins press her.  
Guilt has unhing'd her reason.

PORTER

Beshrew thy heart,

Thou dost asperse her. I know those are paid  
For being saints that—

BENEDICT

Stop that tongue profane:  
Thou art infected with her heresies.  
Judgments already have o'erta'en thy mistress.  
Thou at thy peril leave her to her fate.

PORTER

Father, belike there is a different heaven  
For learned clerks and such poor men as I am.  
Me it behoves to have such humble virtues  
As suit my simple calling. To my masters  
For raiment, food, for salary, and protection  
My honest heart owes gratitude. They took me  
From drudgery to guard their honour'd persons.  
Why am I call'd a man of worship? Why,  
As up the chancel I precede my lady,  
Do th' vassals of the castle, rang'd in rows,  
Bow e'en to Peter?—why? but, by the rood,  
Because she plac'd this silver-garnish'd staff  
In Peter's hand. Why, but because this robe,  
Floating with seemly tufts, was her gift too.  
For honours of such note owe I not thanks?  
Were my life much to sacrifice for hers?

BENEDICT

Peace with thy saucy lecture, or harangue  
Thy maudling fellows o'er the hall's dull embers  
With this thy gossiping morality.  
Now answer—mentions she her son?



PORTER

Ah me!  
I had forgotten—this old brain—'tis true,  
'Tis very true—she raves upon her son,  
And thinks he came in vision.

BENEDICT

'Twas no vision.

PORTER

How! heav'nly fathers!

BENEDICT

He has spoken with her.

PORTER

And I not see him!—go to; it could not be.  
How did he pass the gate?

BENEDICT

I tell thee, Edmund,  
Thy quondam master's son, has seen his mother;  
Is but few paces hence.

PORTER

Oh! joyous sounds!  
Where is my noble lord?

BENEDICT

Here—and undone.

## SCENE III

FLORIAN, BENEDICT, PORTER

FLORIAN

Sure the foul fogs, that hang in lazy clouds  
 O'er yonder moat, infect the moping air,  
 And steam with phrenzy's melancholy fumes.  
 But now and I met Edmund—with a voice  
 Appall'd and hollow like a parricide's,  
 He told me he was wedded. When I asked  
 To see his bride, he groan'd, and said his joys  
 Were blasted e'er accomplish'd. As he urg'd  
 His suit, the maiden's tears and shrieks had struck  
 On his sick fancy like his mother's cries!  
 Th' idea writhing from his brain, had won  
 His eye-balls, and he thought he saw his mother!  
 —This ague of contagious bigotry  
 Has gain'd almost on me. Methinks yon monk  
 Might fell me with a chaplet—Edmund left me  
 Abruptly—I must learn this mystery.  
 Health to your rev'rence—[*To BENEDICT.*] Hah!  
                   my new acquaintance! [*To PETER.*]  
 In tears, my good old friend! What! has the cricket  
 Chirp'd ominously—come, away with sorrow:  
 Joy marks this day its own.

PORTER

A joyfull day!

The twentieth of September!—note it, sir,  
 Note it for th' ugliest of the calendar.

'Twas on this day—ay, this day sixteen years  
The noble Count came to his death!

FLORIAN

No matter.

Th' arrival of a nobler younger Count  
Shall mock prognostics past, and paint the year  
With smiling white, fair fortune's favourite livery.  
But tell me, father, tell me, has the Countess

[To BENEDICT.

Pardon'd her son's return? has she receiv'd him  
With th' overflowings of a mother's joy?  
Smiles she upon his wishes—As I enter'd  
Methought I heard an hymeneal accent.  
And yet, it seems, the favour of your countenance  
Wears not the benediction of rejoicing.

BENEDICT

The Countess must unfold her book of fate.  
I am not skill'd to read so dark a volume.

FLORIAN

Oracular as the Delphic god!—good Peter,  
Thy wit and mine are more upon a level.  
Resolve me, has the Countess seen lord Edmund?  
Say, did she frown and chide? or bathe his cheek  
With tears as warm as leaping blood?

PORTER

Ah! master,

You seem too good to mock our misery.  
A soldier causes woe, but seldom jeers it.  
Or know'st thou not—and sure 'twill pity thee!

The gracious Countess, our kind lady—indeed  
I trust they will return—is strangely chang'd!

## FLORIAN

By my good sword, thou shalt unriddle, priest.  
What means this tale? what mintage is at work  
To coin delusion, that this fair domain  
May become holy patrimony? Thus  
Teach you our matrons to defraud their issue  
By artificial fits and acted ravings?  
I have beheld your juggles, heard your dreams.  
Th' imposture shall be known. These sixteen years  
Has my friend Edmund pin'd in banishment:  
While masses, mumblings, goblins and processions  
Usurp'd his heritage, and made of Narbonne  
A theatre of holy interludes  
And sainted frauds. But day darts on your spells.  
Th' enlighten'd age eschews your vile deceits,  
And truth shall do mankind and Edmund justice.

## BENEDICT

Unhallow'd boy, I scorn thy contumely.  
In camps and trenches vent thy lewd reproaches,  
Blaspheming while ye tremble. Heav'n's true  
soldiers,  
Endu'd with more than mortal courage, defy  
Hosts numerous as the Pagan chivalry  
Pour'd forth to crush the church's rising glories.  
—But this is an enlighten'd age!—behold  
The triumphs of your sect! to yonder plains  
Bend thy illumin'd eye! The Vaudois there,  
Writhing in flames, and quiv'ring at th' approach

Of Rome's impending knife, attest the blessings  
 Conferr'd on their instructed ignorance!

FLORIAN

Monstrous! unparallel'd! Are cries and groans  
 Of butcher'd conscientious men the hymns  
 With which you chant the victories of the church?  
 Do you afflict and laugh? stab and huzza?  
 —But I am dallying with my own impatience—  
 Where is this mother? I will tent her soul;  
 And warn thee, if I find suggestion's whisper  
 Has practic'd to the detriment of my friend,  
 Thy caitiff life shall answer to my sword,  
 Tho' shrin'd within the pillars of the Vatican.

BENEDICT

Judge heaven betwixt us!  
 If e'er the dews of night shall fall, thou seest not  
 The cup of wrath pour'd out, and triple woes  
 O'ertake unheard-of crimes; call me false prophet,  
 Renounce my gods and join thee to the impious!  
 Thou in thy turn, if truth lives on my lips,  
 Tremble! repent!—behold! the hour approaches!

#### SCENE IV

COUNTESS, FLORIAN, BENEDICT, PORTER

COUNTESS

I dare not shoot the gulf—ha! Benedict!  
 Thou art a priest, thy mission should be holy,  
 If thou beliest not heav'n—quick, do thy work!



If there is pow'r in pray'r, teach me some sounds  
 To charm my senses, lest my coward flesh  
 Recoil, and win the mastery o'er my will.  
 —'Tis not the wound; it is the consequence!  
 See! see! my Narbonne stands upon the brink,  
 And snatches from the readiest fury there  
 A blazing torch! he whirls it round my head,  
 And asks where are my children!

PORTER

Split, my heart,

At this sad sight!

FLORIAN

Stand off! thou'rt an accomplice—  
 Madam, it was your morning's gracious pleasure  
 I should attend you. May I hope your pardon,  
 If I anticipate—

COUNTESS

Ha! Who art thou?

FLORIAN

Have you forgot me, lady?

COUNTESS

Memory

Is full. A head distract as mine can hold  
 Two only objects, guilt and eternity!

FLORIAN

No more of this. Time has abundant hours  
 For holy meditation. Nor have years

Trac'd such deep admonition on your cheek,  
As call for sudden preparation—

COUNTESS

Prayer [*wildly*.

Can do no more: its efficacy's lost—  
What must be, must be soon—He will return.

FLORIAN

He is return'd, your son—have you not seen him?

COUNTESS

Would I had never!

FLORIAN

Come, this is too much.

This villainous monk has step'd 'twixt you and  
nature;

And misreported of the noblest gentleman  
That treads on christian ground—Are you a mother?  
Are legends dearer to you than your son?  
Think you 'tis piety to gorge these miscreants,  
And drive your child from your embrace—

COUNTESS

Ye saints!

This was the dæmon prompted it—avaunt!  
He beckons me—I will not—lies my lord  
Not bleeding in the porch? I'll tear my hair  
And bathe his wounds—Where's Beatrice!—mon-  
ster! monster!

She leads the dæmon—see! they spread the couch!  
No, I will perish with my Narbonne—Oh!

240 THE MYSTERIOUS MOTHER [ACT V

My strength, my reason faint—darkness surrounds  
me!

To-morrow!—never will to-morrow come!

Let me die here! *[sinks on a bench.]*

FLORIAN

This is too much for art.

Chill damps sit on her brow: her pulse replies not.

BENEDICT

No; 'tis fictitious all—'twas I inspir'd

The horrors she has been so kind to utter

At my suggestion.

FLORIAN

That insulting sneer

Speaks more the devil than if thy words were serious.

Be her distraction counterfeit or real,

Her sex demands compassion or assistance.

But she revives!

COUNTESS

Is death then past! my brain

Beats not its wonted tempest—in the grave

There is peace then!

FLORIAN

Her agony abates.

Look up and view your friends.

COUNTESS

Alas! I fear me,

This is life still!—am I not in my castle?

Sure I should know this garden—good old Peter!

My honest servant, thou I see wilt never

Quit thy poor mistress!—kind old man, he weeps!

PORTER

Indeed it is for joy—how fares my lady?

COUNTESS

Exhausted, Peter, that I have not strength  
To be distracted—hah! your looks betray  
Tremendous inuendoes!—gracious heaven!  
Have I said ought—has wildness—trust me, sirs,  
In these sad fits my unhing'd fancy wanders  
Beyond the compass of things possible.  
Sometimes an angel of excelling brightness,  
I seem to whirl the orbs and launch the comet.  
Then hideous wings with forked points array me,  
And I suggest strange crimes to shuddering matrons—  
Sick fancy must be pardon'd.

BENEDICT

(Artfull woman! [*aside.*])

Thou subtle emblem of thy sex, compos'd  
Of madness and deceit—but since thy brain  
Has lost its poize, I will send those shall shake it  
Beyond recovery of its reeling bias.) [*Exit.*]

[COUNTESS makes a sign to PETER to retire.]

## SCENE V

COUNTESS, FLORIAN

COUNTESS

This interval is well—'tis thy last boon,  
Tremendous Providence! and I will use it  
As 'twere th' elixir of descending mercy:

Not a drop shall be waste—accept my thanks!  
 Preserve my reason! and preserve my child!

[To FLORIAN.

—Stranger, thy years are green; perhaps may mock  
 A woman's words, a mother's woe!—but honour,  
 If I believe this garb, is thy profession.  
 Hast thou not dealt in blood?—then thou hast heard  
 The dying groan, and sin's despairing accent.  
 Struck it not on thy soul! Recall it, sir!  
 What then was thy sensation, feel for me!

FLORIAN

I shudder! listen, pity, and respect thee!

COUNTESS

Resolve my anxious heart. Tho' vagrant pleasure,  
 Th' ebriety of youth, and worse than passion,  
 Example, lead thee to the strumpet vice;  
 Say, if beneath the waves of dissipation,  
 The germ of virtue blossoms in thy soul.

FLORIAN

A soldier's honour is his virtue. Gownmen  
 Wear it for show, and barter it for gold,  
 And have it still. A soldier and his honour  
 Exist together, and together perish.

COUNTESS

I do believe thee. Thus my Narbonne thought.  
 Then hear me, child of honour! Canst thou cherish  
 Unblemished innocence! wilt thou protect it?  
 Wilt thou observe its wand'rings? call it back,  
 Confine it to the path that leads to happiness?



Haſt thou that genuine heroism of ſoul  
To hug the little fondling ſufferer,  
When neſtling in thy boſom, drown'd in bluſhes,  
Nor caſt her from thee, while a grinning world  
Reviles her with a mother's foul miſdeeds?

FLORIAN

My arm is ſworn to innocence diſtreſt;  
Point out the lovely mourner.

COUNTESS

'Tis enough.  
Nor ſuffer th' ebbing moments more enquiry.  
My orphan ſhall be thine—nay, ſtart not, ſir,  
Your loves are known to me. Wealth paſt th'  
ambition  
Of Gallia's proudeſt baron ſhall endow her.  
Within this caſket is a monarch's ransom.  
Ten thouſand ducats more are lodg'd within.  
All this is thine with Adeliza's hand.

FLORIAN

With Adeliza!

COUNTESS

Ha! doſt thou recoil?  
Doſt thou not love her?

FLORIAN

I love Adeliza!  
Lady, recall thy wand'ring memory.

COUNTESS

Doſt thou reject her? and has hope beguil'd me  
In this ſad only moment? Haſt thou dar'd

With ruffian insolence gaze on her sweetness,  
 And mark it for an hour of wanton dalliance?  
 Oh! I will guard my child, tho' gaping dæmons  
 Howl with impatience!

FLORIAN

Most rever'd of matrons,  
 Tho' youth and rosy joy flush on my cheek,  
 Tho' the licentious camp and rapine's holiday  
 Have been my school; deem not so reprobate  
 My morals, that my eye would note no distance  
 Between the harlot's glance and my friend's bride.

COUNTESS

Thy friend! what friend!

FLORIAN

Lord Edmund—

COUNTESS

What of him?

FLORIAN

Is Adeliza's lord; her wedded bridegroom.

COUNTESS

Confusion! phrenzy! blast me, all ye furies!  
 Edmund and Adeliza! when! where! how!  
 Edmund wed Adeliza! quick, unsay  
 The monstrous tale—oh! prodigy of ruin!  
 Does my own son then boil with fiercer fires  
 Than scorch'd his impious mother's madding veins?  
 Did reason reassume its shatter'd throne,  
 But as spectatress of this last of horrors?

Oh! let my dagger drink my heart's black blood,  
And then present my hell-born progeny  
With drops of kindred sin!—*that* were a torch  
Fit to light up such loves! and fit to quench them!

FLORIAN

What means this agony? didst thou not grant  
The maiden to his wishes?

COUNTESS

Did I not couple  
Distinctions horrible! plan unnatural rites  
To grace my funeral pile, and meet the furies  
More innocent than those I leave behind me!

FLORIAN

Amazement!—I will hasten—grant, ye pow'rs!  
My speed be not too late! [Exit.

COUNTESS

Globe of the world,  
If thy frame split not with such crimes as these,  
It is immortal!

## SCENE VI

COUNTESS, EDMUND, ADELIZA

EDMUND and ADELIZA enter at the opposite door  
from which FLORIAN went out. They kneel to the  
COUNTESS.

EDMUND

Dear parent, look on us, and bless your children!

COUNTESS

My children! horror! horror! yes, too sure  
 Ye are my children!—Edmund, loose that hand;  
 'Tis poison to thy soul!—hell has no venom  
 Like a child's touch!—oh! agonizing thought!  
 —Who made this marriage? whose unhallow'd  
     breath  
 Pronounc'd the incestuous sounds?

EDMUND

Incest! good heavens!

COUNTESS

Yes, thou devoted victim! let thy blood  
 Curdle to stone! perdition circumvents thee!  
 Lo! where this monster stands! thy mother! mistress!  
 The mother of thy daughter, sister, wife!  
 The pillar of accumulated horrors!  
 Hear! tremble!—and then marry, if thou darest!

EDMUND

Yes, I do tremble, tho' thy words are phrenzy.  
 So black must be the passions that inspir'd it,  
 I shudder for thee! pitying duty shudders!

COUNTESS

For me!—O Edmund, I have burst the bond  
 Of every tie—when thou shalt know the crimes,  
 In which this fury did involve thy youth,  
 It will seem piety to curse me, Edmund!  
 Oh! impious night!—hah! is not that my lord?  
 He shakes the curtains of the nuptial couch,  
 And starts to find a son there! [wildly.]

EDMUND

Gracious heaven!  
Grant that these shocking images *be* raving!

ADELIZA

Sweet lady, be compos'd—indeed I thought  
This marriage was thy will—but we will break it—  
Benedict shall discharge us from our vows.

COUNTESS

Thou gentle lamb, from a fell tyger sprung,  
Unknowing half the miseries that await thee!  
—Oh! they are innocent—Almighty pow'r!—  
[*Kneels, but rises again hastily.*

Ha! dare I pray! for others intercede!  
I pray for them, the cause of all their woe!  
—But for a moment give me leave, despair!  
For a short interval lend me that reason  
Thou gavest, heav'n, in vain!—it must be known  
The fullness of my crime; or innocent these  
May plunge them in new horrors. Not a word  
Can 'scape me, but will do the work of thunder,  
And blast these moments I regain from madness!

Ye know how fondly my luxurious fancy  
Doated upon my lord. For eighteen months  
An embassy detain'd him from my bed.  
A harbinger announc'd his near return.  
Love dress'd his image to my longing thoughts  
In all its warmest colours—but the morn,  
In which impatience grew almost to sickness,  
Presented him a bloody corse before me.  
I rav'd—the storm of disappointed passions



Assail'd my reason, fever'd all my blood—  
 Whether too warmly press'd, or too officious  
 To turn the torrent of my grief aside,  
 A damsel, that attended me, disclos'd  
 Thy suit, unhappy boy!

EDMUND

What is to come!  
 Shield me, ye gracious pow'rs, from my own thoughts!  
 My dreadful apprehension!

COUNTESS

Give it scope!  
 Thou canst not harbour a foreboding thought  
 More dire, than I conceiv'd, I executed.  
 Guilt rush'd into my soul—my fancy saw thee  
 Thy father's image—

EDMUND

Swallow th' accursed sound!  
 Nor dare to say—

COUNTESS

Yes, thou polluted son!  
 Grief, disappointment, opportunity,  
 Rais'd such a tumult in my madding blood,  
 I took the damsel's place; and while thy arms  
 Twin'd, to thy thinking, round another's waist,  
 Hear, hell, and tremble!—thou didst clasp thy  
 mother!

EDMUND

Oh! execrable!

[ADELIZA *faints*.]

COUNTESS

Be that swoon eternal!  
Nor let her know the rest—she is thy daughter,  
Fruit of that monstrous night!

EDMUND

Infernal woman!

*[Draws his dagger.]*

My dagger must repay a tale like this!  
Blood so distemper'd—no—I must not strike—  
I dare not punish what you dar'd commit.

COUNTESS, *seizing the dagger*

Give me the steel—my arm will not recoil.  
Thus, Edmund, I revenge thee! *[stabs herself.]*

EDMUND

Help! ho! help!

For both I tremble, dare not succour either!

COUNTESS

Peace! and conceal our shame—quick, frame some  
legend—  
They come!

## SCENE VII

COUNTESS, EDMUND, ADELIZA, FLORIAN, BENEDICT,  
Attendants

COUNTESS

Assist the maid—an accident—

*[They bear off ADELIZA.]*

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By my own hand—ha! Benedict!—but no!  
*I* must not turn accuser.

BENEDICT

Mercy! heaven!

Who did this deed?

COUNTESS

Myself.

BENEDICT

What was the cause?

COUNTESS

Follow me to yon gulph, and thou wilt know.  
I answer not to man.

BENEDICT

Bethink thee, lady—

COUNTESS

Thought ebbs apace—O Edmund, could a blessing  
Part from my lips, and not become a curse,  
I would—poor Adeliza—'tis accomplish'd! [*dies.*

BENEDICT

My lord, explain these horrors. Wherefore fell  
Your mother? and why faints your wife?

EDMUND

My wife!

Thou damning priest! I have no wife—thou know'st  
it—

Thou gavest me indeed—no—not my tongue

Ere the dread sound escape it!—bear away  
That hatefull monk—

BENEDICT

Who was the prophet now?

*[As he goes out, to FLORIAN.]*

Remember me!

EDMUND

O Florian, we must haste,  
To where fell war assumes its ugliest form:  
I burn to rush on death!

FLORIAN

I dare not ask;  
But stiffen'd with amazement I deplore—

EDMUND

O tender friend! I must not violate  
Thy guiltless ear!—ha! 'tis my father calls!  
I dare not see him! *[wildly.]*

FLORIAN

Be compos'd, my lord,  
We are all your friends—

EDMUND

Have I no kindred here?  
They will confound all friendship! interweave  
Such monstrous union—

FLORIAN

Good my lord, resume

Your wonted reason. Let us in and comfort  
Your gentle bride—

EDMUND

Forbid it, all ye pow'rs!

O Florian, bear her to the holy sisters.  
Say, 'twas my mother's will she take the veil.  
I never must behold her!—never more  
Review this theatre of monstrous guilt!  
No; to th' embattled foe I will present  
This hated form—and welcome be the sabre  
That leaves no atom of it undefac'd!

FINIS.



## POSTSCRIPT

FROM the time that I first undertook the foregoing scenes, I never flattered myself that they would be proper to appear on the stage. The subject is so horrid, that I thought it would shock, rather than give satisfaction to an audience. Still I found it so truly tragic in the essential springs of terror and pity, that I could not resist the impulse of adapting it to the scene, though it could never be practicable to produce it there. I saw too, that it would admit of great situation, of lofty characters, and of those sudden and unforeseen strokes, which have singular effect in operating a revolution in the passions, and in interesting the spectator: it was capable of furnishing not only a contrast of characters, but a contrast of virtue and vice in the same character; and by laying the scene in what age and country I pleased, pictures of ancient manners might be drawn, and many allusions to historic events introduced, to bring the action nearer to the imagination of the spectator. The moral resulting from the calamities attendant on unbounded passion, even to the destruction of the criminal's race, was obviously suited to the purpose and object of tragedy.

The subject is more truly horrid than even that of *Œdipus*: and yet I make no doubt but a Grecian poet would have made no scruple of exhibiting it on

the theatre. Revolting as it is, a son assassinating his mother, as Orestes does, exceeds the guilt that appears in the foregoing scenes. As murder is the highest crime that man can commit against his fellow-beings, parricide is the deepest degree of murder. There is no age, but has suffered such guilt to be represented on the stage; and yet I feel the disgust that must arise at the catastrophe of this piece; so much is our delicacy more apt to be shocked than our good nature. Nor will it be an excuse that I thought the story founded on an event in real life.

I had heard when very young, that a gentlewoman, under uncommon agonies of mind, had waited on archbishop Tillotson, and besought his counsel. A damsel that had served her, had many years before, acquainted her that she was importuned by the gentlewoman's son to grant him a private meeting. The mother ordered the maiden to make the assignation, when she said she would discover herself, and reprimand him for his criminal passion; but, being hurried away by a much more criminal passion herself, she kept the assignation without discovering herself. The fruit of this horrid artifice was a daughter, whom the gentlewoman caused to be educated very privately in the country; but proving very lovely, and being accidentally met by her father-brother, who never had the slightest suspicion of the truth, he had fallen in love with, and actually married her. The wretched guilty mother learning what had happened, and distracted with the consequence of her

crime, had now resorted to the archbishop to know in what manner she should act. The prelate charged her never to let her son and daughter know what had passed, as they were innocent of any criminal intention. For herself, he bade her almost despair.

Some time after I had finished the play on this ground-work, a gentleman to whom I had communicated it, accidentally discovered the origin of the tradition in the novels of the queen of Navarre, Vol. II, Nov. 30; and to my surprise I found a strange concurrence of circumstances between the story as there related, and as I had adapted it to my piece: for, though I believed it to have happened in the reign of king William, I had, for a purpose to be mentioned hereafter, thrown it back to the eve of the Reformation; and the queen, it appears, dates the event in the reign of Louis XII. I had chosen Narbonne for the scene; the queen places it in Languedoc. The rencontres are of little importance, and perhaps, curious to nobody but the author.

In order to make use of a canvas so shocking, it was necessary as much as possible to palliate the crime, and raise the character of the criminal. To attain the former end, I imagined the moment in which she has lost a beloved husband, when grief and disappointment, and a conflict of passions might be supposed to have thrown her reason off its guard, and exposed her to the danger under which she fell. Strange as the moment may seem for vice to have seized on her, still it makes her less hateful than if she had coolly meditated so foul a crime. I have also

endeavoured to make her very fondness for her husband in some measure the cause of her guilt.

But as the guilt could not be lessened without destroying the subject itself, I thought that her immediate horror and consequent repentance were essential to her being suffered on the stage. Still more was necessary. The audience must be prejudiced in her favour, or an uniform sentiment of disgust would have been raised against her through the whole piece. For this reason I suppressed the story till the last scene, and bestowed every ornament of sense, unbigotted piety, and interesting contrition on the character that was at last to raise universal indignation; in hopes that some degree of pity would linger in the breast of the audience, and that a whole life of virtue and penance might in some measure atone for a moment, though a most odious moment, of depraved imagination.

Some of my friends have thought that I have pushed the sublimity of sense and reason in the character of the Countess to too great a height, considering the dark and superstitious age in which she lived. They are of opinion that the excess of her repentance, would have been more likely to have thrown her into the arms of enthusiasm. Perhaps it might—but I was willing to insinuate that virtue could and ought to leave more lasting stings on a mind conscious of having fallen; and that weak minds alone believe or feel, that conscience is to be lulled asleep by the incantations of bigotry. However, to reconcile even the seeming inconsistency

objected to, I here place my fable at the dawn of the reformation, consequently the strength of mind in the Countess may be supposed to have been borrowed from other sources, beside those she found in her own understanding.

Her character is certainly new, and the cast of the whole play unlike any other that I am acquainted with. The incidents seem to me to flow naturally from the situation; and with all the defects in the writing, of many of which I am conscious, and many more will, no doubt, be discovered; still I think, that as a tragedy, its greatest fault is the horror, which it must occasion in the audience, particularly in the fairer, more tender, and less criminal part of it.

It will be observed, that after the discovery of her son, the Countess is for some moments in every scene disordered in her understanding, by the violent impression of that interview, and from the guilt that is ever uppermost in her mind—yet she is never quite mad; still less does she talk like Belvidera, of

*Lutes, laurels, seas of milk, and ships of amber.*

which is not being mad but light-headed.—When madness has taken possession of the person, such character ceases to be fit for the stage, or at least should appear there but for a short time; it being the business of the theatre to exhibit passions not distempers. The finest picture ever drawn of a head distempered by misfortune is that of king Lear. His thoughts dwell on the ingratitude of his daughters, and every sentence that falls from his wildness



excites reflection and pity. Had frenzy entirely seized him, our compassion would abate, as we should conclude that he no longer felt unhappiness. Shakspeare wrote as a philosopher, Otway as a poet.

The villainy of Benedict was planned, to divide the indignation of the audience, and intercept some of it from the Countess. Nor will the blackness of his character appear extravagant, if we call to mind the crimes committed by Catholic churchmen, when the reformation not only provoked their rage, but threatened them with total ruin.

I have said that terror and pity naturally arose from the subject, and that the moral is just. These are the merits of the story, and not of the author. It is true also, that the rules laid down by the critics, are strictly inherent in the piece—remark I do not say observed; for I had written above three acts before I had thought of, or set myself down to observe those rules; and consequently it is no vanity to say, that the three unities reign throughout the whole play. The time necessary is not above two or three hours longer than the representation, or at most does not require more than half the four and twenty hours granted to poets by those their masters. The unity of place is but once shifted, and that merely from the platform without the castle to the garden within it, so that a single wall is the whole infringement of the second law.—And for the third unity of action, it is so entire that not the smallest episode intervenes. Every scene tends to bring on the catastrophe, and the story is never interrupted or diverted from its

course. The return of Edmund, and his marriage, necessarily produce the denouement.

If the critics are pleased with this conformity to their laws, I shall be glad they have that satisfaction. For my own part, I set little value on that merit which was accidental; it is at best but mechanic and of a subordinate kind, and more apt to produce improbable situations than to remove them.

I wish I had no more to answer for the faults of the piece, than I had merit to boast in the mechanism. I was desirous of striking a little out of the common road, and of introducing some novelty on our stage. Our genius and cast of thinking are very different from the French, and yet our theatre, which should represent manners, depends almost entirely at present on translations and copies from our neighbours. Enslaved as they are to rules, and modes, still I do not doubt that many, both of their tragic and comic authors, would be glad they dared to use the liberties which are secured to our stage. They are so cramped by the rigorous forms of composition, that they would think themselves greatly indemnified by an ampler latitude of thought. I have chalked out some paths, which may be happily improved by better poets and men of more genius than I possess; and which may be introduced in subjects better calculated for action than the story I have chosen.

The excellence of our dramatic writers is by no means equal to the Great men we have produced in other works. Theatric genius lay dormant after Shakspeare; waked with some bold and glorious, but

irregular, and often ridiculous flights in Dryden;—revived in Otway;—maintained a placid, pleasing kind of dignity in Rowe, and even shone in his *Jane Shore*.—It trod in sublime and classic fetters in Cato, but was void of nature or the power of affecting the passions. In *Southern* it seemed a ray of nature and Shakspeare, but falling on an age still more Hottentot, was stifled in those gross and barbarous productions tragi comedies. It turned to tuneful nonsense in the *Mourning Bride*; grew stark mad in Lee, whose cloak, a little the worse for wear, fell on Young, but with both was still a poet's cloak. It recovered its senses in Hughes and Fenton, who were afraid it should relapse, and accordingly kept it down with a timid but amiable hand—and then it languished. We have not mounted again above the two last.

PROLOGUE to the MYSTERIOUS  
MOTHER

FROM no French model breathes the muse  
to-night;

The scene she draws is horrid, not polite.  
She dips her pen in terror. Will ye shrink?  
Shall foreign critics teach you how to think?  
Had Shakespeare's magic dignified the stage,  
If timid laws had school'd th' insipid age?  
Had Hamlet's spectre trod the midnight round?  
Or Banquo's issue been in vision crown'd?  
Free as your country, Britons, be your scene!  
Be Nature now, and now Invention, queen!  
Be Vice alone corrected and restrain'd.  
Can crimes be punish'd by a bard enchain'd?  
Shall the bold censor back be sent to school,  
And told, This is not nice; That is not rule?  
The French no crimes of magnitude admit;  
They seldom startle, just alarm the pit.  
At most, when dire necessity ordains  
That death should sluice some King's or lover's veins,  
A tedious confident appears, to tell  
What dismal woes behind the scenes befell.  
Chill'd with the drowsy tale, his audience fret,  
While the starv'd piece concludes like a gazette.

The tragic Greeks with nobler licence wrote;  
Nor veil'd the eye, but pluck'd away the mote.

Whatever passion prompted, was their game;  
Not delicate, while chastisement their aim.  
Electra now a parent's blood demands;  
Now parricide distains the Theban's hands,  
And love incestuous knots his nuptial bands. }  
Such is our scene; from real life it rose;  
Tremendous picture of domestic woes.  
If terror shake you, or soft pity move,  
If dreadful pangs o'ertake unbridled love;  
Excuse the bard, who from your feelings draws  
All the reward he aims at, your applause.



## EPILOGUE

to be spoken by Mrs. Clive

OUR bard, whose head is fill'd with Gothic  
fancies,

And teems with ghosts and giants and romances,  
Intended to have kept your passions up,  
And sent you crying out your eyes, to sup.  
Would you believe it—though *mine* all the vogue,  
He meant his nun should speak the epilogue.  
His nun! so pious, pliant and demure—  
Lord! you have had enough of her, I'm sure!  
I storm'd—for, when my honour is at stake,  
I make the pillars of the green-room shake.  
Heroes half-drest, and goddesses half-lac'd,  
Avoid my wrath, and from my thunders haste.  
I vow'd by all the gods of Rome and Greece,  
'Twas I would finish his too doleful piece.  
I, flush'd with comic roguery—said I,  
Will make 'em laugh, more than you make 'em cry.  
Bless me! said he—among the Greeks, dear Kat'rine,  
Of smutty epilogues I know no pattern.  
Smutty! said I—and then I stamp'd the stage  
With all a turkey-cock's majestic rage—  
When did you know in public—or in private,  
Doubles entendres my strict virtue drive at?  
Your muses, sir, are not more free from ill  
On mount Parnassus—or on Strawb'rry-hill.

And though with her repentance you may hum one,  
I would not play your countess—to become one.  
So *very* guilty, and so *very* good,  
An angel, with such errant flesh and blood!  
Such sinning, praying, preaching—I'll be kist,  
If I don't think she was a methodist!

Saints are the produce of a vicious age:  
Crimes must abound, ere sectaries can rage.  
His mask no canting confessor assumes;  
With acted zeal no flaming bigot fumes;  
Till the rich harvest nods with swelling grain,  
And the sharp sickle can assure his gain.  
But soon shall hypocrites their flights deplore,  
Nor grim enthusiasts vex Britannia more.  
Virtue shall guard her daughters from their arts,  
Shine in their eyes, and blossom in their hearts.  
They need no lectures in fanatic tone:  
Their lesson lived before them—on the throne.

## PREFACE TO THE 1781 EDITION

THE Author of the following Tragedy is so far from thinking it worthy of being offered to the Public, that he has done every thing in his power to suppress the publication—in vain. It is solely to avoid its being rendered still worse by a surreptitious edition, that he is reduced to give it from his own copy. He is sensible that the subject is disgusting, and by no means compensated by the execution. It was written several years ago; and to prevent the trouble of reading it, or having it transcribed, a few copies were printed and given away. One or two have been circulated, and different editions have been advertised, which occasion the present publication. All the favour the Author solicits or expects, is, to be believed how unwillingly he has submitted to its appearance: he cannot be more blamed than he blames himself for having undertaken so disagreeable a story, and for having hazarded the publicity by letting it out of his own hands. He respects the judgment of the Public too much to offer to them voluntarily what he does not think deserves their approbation.

*April 29, 1781.*

## ADVERTISEMENT

*From the PUBLISHERS*

THE Tragedy here offered to the Public, has long been known in private to a few individuals. The admiration it justly claimed, the continued praises of those who had been fortunate enough to peruse it, naturally excited curiosity. Intimation having been given to us of an hasty edition intended, the idea suggested itself of anticipating that scheme, we were solicitous the piece should appear in a handsome form, and resolved that our best endeavours should be exerted to prevent its being printed incorrectly and in a manner unsuitable to its merit.

The impression was just completed, when hearing accidentally, that some persons, to whose opinion we wish to pay every deference, had expressed the greatest anxiety lest the feelings of the amiable author might be hurt, we determined, without hesitation, to suppress the edition. The expence already incurred, was, after such a hint, a consideration beneath our notice; we were glad to embrace the opportunity of testifying our sincere regard for the high rank, excellent character and eminence in literature of the gentleman who is reputed the author. Finding, however, after an interval of several months, that our well-meant intentions could not be effectual, and that our interference had only delayed, but could not

prevent a publication eagerly demanded, we have been induced, reluctantly, to comply with the general wish, and to deliver for sale a work that has been a considerable time in readiness.

We had previously taken the precaution to apprise the accomplished author of the motives by which we had been influenced. We flatter ourselves he will be pleased to accept of our apology, and beg leave to assure him, we should esteem it a great misfortune to meet with his disapprobation, and as to stand well in his opinion is our highest ambition, so he is the last person in the world to whom we should be wanting in respect.



## MASON'S ALTERATIONS

Page 163, line 24.

*THE passion love Did ne'er anticipate . . .*

“ Ne'er fir'd her breast save only for her Lord;  
And him she lov'd with so entire a soul,  
That she had died e'er wilfully foregone  
That Faith she plighted with him at the Altar.  
This with such modest ” etc.

P. 168, l. 18. *While Narbonne liv'd, my fully-sated soul . . .*

“ There was a time when my full-sated soul.”

P. 173, l. 9. *That joys are momentary ; . . .*  
“ And that those crimes may be of such black sort  
As wake remorse eternal, tho they spring  
From Passions error, not from horrid guilt  
Premeditated; shall he teach me spells  
To make my sense ” etc.

P. 175, l. 10. *Was the same night. . . . Became appriz'd.*

“ Did usher in the morn your father died.

EDMUND

Well what of that, sage Monitor, 'twas chance  
That kill'd him, not a lingring fit of sickness  
And Beatrice & I had parted long  
E'er tidings came of this his sudden fate  
The Maid as I conjecture in her fright  
(For at the time she tended on her mistress)  
Did let some word escape w<sup>ch</sup> might betray

Our late soft dalliance. Whether thus my Mother  
Became appriz'd " etc.

P. 195, l. 25. —*Greater! oh! impious! . . . —  
Perhaps my virtues . . .*

" Greater! oh impious! yet there may be greater  
There may be such, as would have dard to do  
From very Vice, what I—O think it not—  
They could not be so blackly criminal.  
—Perhaps my virtues " etc.

P. 217, l. 26. *It spoke resemblance . . .—My child,  
retire.*

" it spoke resemblance  
To all I hate or love.—My child, retire."

P. 218, l. 11. *Thy own dire passions.*

" thy own blind passions."

P. 220, l. 23. *Lap thee in delights?*

" lap thee in delights?  
For Adeliza know in such a state  
Our very happiness is its own bane;  
It conjures up fell doubts that end in crimes—  
O Child beware beware of Jealousy."

P. 222, l. 2. *Hear my last breath . . . perdition!*

" Hear my last breath Love not the Knight too well  
Ev'n tho he be thy husband, Love may lead thee  
To crimes w<sup>ch</sup> but to think of is perdition."

P. 223, l. 5. *How ill I can resist thy forcefull  
impulse.*

" But 'tis impossible to check their impulse."

P. 224, l. 22. *Passion's crime.*

" . . . folly's crime."

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P. 239, l. 27. *She leads the dæmon!—see! they spread the couch!*

“She wakes the Dæmon—see the Couch is spread.”

P. 244, l. 25. *Does my own son . . . madding veins!*

“Will my own Son then with his Mother’s blindness Rush on a crime as horrid as her own.”

P. 247, l. 22. *Ye know how fondly . . . unhappy boy!*  
For this speech of fourteen lines is substituted:

“Ye know how fondly even to Jealousy  
I doated on my Lord; yes I was Jealous  
Of every female Jealous; Chief of her  
(So would Hell have it) her thy Beatrice.  
O would she had been thine! thou thinkst she was  
Edmund she neer was thine.”

P. 248, l. 13. *More dire . . . Be that swoon eternal!*  
For these eleven lines is substituted:

“More dire than was the deed. My jealous rage  
Falsely surmis’d it knew the very night  
The very hour when to the damsells bed  
My husband meant to steal, that fatal hour  
I seizd her; in yon tower confind her closely  
And in her stead—

EDMUND

Swallow th’ accursed sound

Nor dare to say

COUNTESS

Yes, thou polluted Son

I took the damsells place, & while my arms  
Twind to my thinking round my husbands waist  
Thine to thy thinking round young Beatrice  
Hear Hell and tremble! I did clasp my Son

And thou thy mother!

swoon

Be that ~~sleep~~ eternal  
Nor let her know " etc.

[ADELIZA *faints*.]

P. 249, l. 6. *Infernal woman . . . I revenge thee.*  
For these six lines is substituted:

" EDMUND

Horror! Horror!

My dagger must revenge—but how revenge  
Whom shall I strike myself or her? Say father  
Say injurd shade—

COUNTESS [*seizing the dagger*]

Thus Edmund I revenge  
Both him and thee! [*Stabs herself.*"]

## POSTSCRIPT TO THE ALTERATIONS

TO make the foregoing Scene proper to appear upon the stage was the reason why the Alterations were <sup>written</sup> ~~made~~, or rather to soften the horror of the subject so far as to prevent it from shocking an Audience, wh<sup>ch</sup> the Author says he was well aware it would do before he wrote the tragedy. If the Alterations are for the better, it will prove that the original story was not so truly tragic as he apprehended it to be; & that in fact it was defective in the two essential springs of Terror and Pity.

It was defective for the reason the Author mentions in the opposite paragraph, viz., that the subject is MORE *truly horrid* than even that of Œdipus. to make it *equally horrid* is the purpose of the Alterations for a Grecian Audience would certainly have been shocked had Sophocles made Œdipus commit Incest *prepenſe*. They would have been shocked equally had Orestes committed parricide *prepenſe*, and the incestuous passion of Phædra (a case more in point than either of the Other tho not adverted to by the Author) would have been equally revolting; had not Euripides drawn her Character as impelled by a supernatural power; yet Virtuous in herself & only criminal by fatality. Parricide & incest thus circumstanced may fitly enough be represented on the stage, Orestes *furiis agitatus*, is an object of true tragic pity at the same time that his action awakens a true tragic terror. The same is the case with Œdipus and Phædra both are driven into crimes by the anger of the Gods, & therefore are not free agents, & consequently their guilt, great as it is, does not



disgust us w<sup>ch</sup> it certainly would have done, had it been perpetrated voluntarily or with design. And These Examples from Antiquity I apprehend fully authorize the attempt of making the Crime of the Countess to arise from mistake in order to render her as pityable as Œdipus, Orestes or Phædra.

The canvass by this means renderd less shocking would even still be too much so if the Character of the Criminal was not as greatly raisd as it is by the Author, nevertheless *his* manner of palliating the Crime, by imagining her to commit it at the moment in w<sup>ch</sup> she had lost a beloved husband is a *strange one* indeed. by this Our *delicacy* is very reasonably shocked whatever becomes of our good nature; Our Common Feelings are more shocked than either because common Experience pronounces the fact unnatural & absolutely improbable. However as I have said he has been much more successful in his manner of raising her Character w<sup>ch</sup> if he had not done in the very manner he has the foregoing Alterations could hardly have Taken place. But going as they do upon his axiom. Viz that a crime so horrid as incest once perpetrated would affect an ingenuous mind in the same degree whether it was done intentionally or no. The ornaments of sense the unbigotted piety & interesting Contrition w<sup>ch</sup> he has given her secure her Character from raising indignation at the last. pity instead of lingering in the breasts of the Audience, when the Denouement is compleated, becomes stronger than ever, they blame her for nothing but her Jealousy in like manner as they blame Œdipus only for his rashness & impetuosity And her Character becomes one of these perfectly tragic ones w<sup>ch</sup> Aristotle describes in his 18<sup>th</sup> Cap: since the great Crime w<sup>ch</sup> she has committed proceeded *δια μαρτίαν τινά*. from an

error into w<sup>ch</sup> a different & very excusable passion betrayd her. On this account therefore little Alteration was necessary in any of the scenes except in such as immediately related to the Denouement; Because had the Author originally written the Character to make it correspond with such denouement, it is plain he must have made it as amiable as he has done with a view of softening it for his own purpose that of pleasing merely in the closet.

As the Author hit upon a regular plan, as it seems without adverting to the rules of the three Unitys one should think it might have led him to consider whether that mode w<sup>ch</sup> his own good taste led him to adopt was not founded in something more than *mechanism* & was not the result of just criticism founded in Truth.

In my opinion they are a great if not the best preventative against improbable situations. A regular Chorus indeed often occasions improbable situations, but this is not one of the three Unities w<sup>ch</sup> I am defending.

This is certainly true. and the reason is that the French plans are better i.e. more regular than our own. Aaron Hills translations from Voltaire & Hooles from *Metastasio* are a proof of this.

It is the mode rather than the manner that has cramp'd the French Poets. the absurd mode of Gallantry deemd as essential by Corneille & Racine. Voltaire emancipated himself from this mode, but not from the unities, & by so doing produced tragedies w<sup>ch</sup> for variety of incident & Character have no equals amongst irregular Dramatists, Shakespeare always excepted, who as Cowley awkwardly but truly says of Pindar is *a vast species alone*.

A NOTE UPON MASON'S CRITICAL REMARKS

Mason's advocacy of a strictly classical form of tragedy, the meticulous observance of the so-called Unities—a theory based upon a complete misunderstanding of Aristotle by the French critics whose authority overawed the rest—and his obvious partiality for the Chorus, are not very happy nor well-reasoned. His alterations in *The Mysterious Mother*, although highly interesting as illustrative of his dramatic theory, are generally superfluous, and sometimes distinctly for the worse. The fact that the Countess commits incest at the moment she has lost a beloved husband may seem strange but is psychologically true and one of the keenest touches in the play. Mason, however, did not appreciate this, and he would have tinkered at and spoiled the situation.

It may be observed that Mason's own dramas scrupulously follow the theatre of Aeschylus and Sophocles. *Elfrida* was published in 1752, and, "adapted to the stage" with music by Dr. Arne, produced at Covent Garden 21st November 1772, with Mrs. Hartley as the heroine; Mrs. Mattocks, Albina; Smith, Athelwold; Bensley, King Edgar; Clarke, Orgar; and a Chorus of British Virgins with the famous vocalist Ann Catley as their Leader. "It is wretchedly acted," wrote Walpole to the author in the following February, "and worse set to music. Orgar had a broad Irish accent . . . Edgar stared at his own crown, and seemed to fear it would tumble off . . . Smith did not play Athelwold ill. Mrs. Hartley is made for the part (*Elfrida*), if beauty and figure would suffice for what you write; but she has no one symptom of genius. Still, it is very affecting, and does admirably for the stage, under all these disadvantages." *Elfrida* arranged for representation

by Mason himself, and with music by Giardini, was acted at Covent Garden in February 1779, with Mrs. Hartley, Mrs. Mattocks, Clarke, as before, Lewis as Athelwold, and Aikin, Edgar.

*Caractacus*, which Mason describes as "a dramatic poem," was published in 1759; "dramatized" by the author, and produced at Covent Garden 6th December 1776, with Clarke in the title-rôle, Lewis, Arviragus, and Mrs. Hartley, Evelina.

Although they contain some agreeable passages of poetry and are pleasing to read in the library, the fact remains that Mason's dramas are not suited for the public stage, and he seems either to have had no perception of, or wilfully to have rejected, theatrical requirements. The poet who designedly selects an antique form must not complain if his work finds its proper home on the shelf alongside the authors whose conventions he has adopted.

Aaron Hill made the following adaptations from Voltaire: *Zara* (*Zaïre*), privately produced at the Great Room in York Buildings, Villiers Street, 29th May 1735, and performed at Drury Lane 12th January 1736, when it had an uninterrupted run of fourteen nights. *Alzira* (*Alzire*) produced at Lincoln's Inn Fields 18th June 1736. *The Roman Revenge* (*La Mort de César*), first performed at the Bath Theatre in the summer season of 1753. *Merope* (*Mérope*), produced at Drury Lane 15th April 1749, and acted eleven times.

John Hoole was an able and fluent translator. He has obliged literature with various elegant versions from the Italian, particularly Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, 2 vols., 1763, and at least eight subsequent editions, and parts of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. He published in two volumes, 12mo, 1767, half a dozen of Metastasio's celebrated plays, agreeably Englished,

## POSTSCRIPT TO ALTERATIONS 277

*Artaxerxes, The Olympiad, Hypsipile, Titus, Demetrius, and Demophoon.* This was republished in 1800, with additional dramas, three volumes. Hoole also adapted from Metastasio for the English stage: *Cyrus* (*Ciro Riconosciuto*), produced at Covent Garden 3rd December 1768, published in 1768; and *Timanthes* (*Demofonte*), produced at Covent Garden 24th February 1770, and published the same year. Both these plays ran into several editions.





## THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO

### TEXTUAL NOTES AND EARLY BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE present text follows the first edition, London, Printed for THO. LOWNDS in Fleet-Street, 1765, which has been carefully collated with the second edition, London, also 1765 and Printed for WILLIAM BATHOE in the *Strand* and THOMAS LOWNDS in *Fleet-Street*. Later issues of *The Castle of Otranto* soon begin extensively and detrimentally to modernize the text. The original italicization disappears; æra becomes era; cloysters, cloisters; chearful, cheerful; whilst the use of capital letters conforms to recent fashion. There were other slighter changes, all of which are now in order corrected.

Page 122, line 10. *a tale of horror*. The first edition, 1765, misprints “a state of horror.” The second edition has “a tale of horror.”

P. 125, l. 31. *reverend tribunal*. So the first edition. The second edition and later read “revered tribunal.”

The Third Edition appeared in 1769, and the title-page is as follows: THE / CASTLE of OTRANTO. / A / GOTHIC STORY. / — *Vanæ / Fingentur species, tamen ut Pes, & Caput uni / Reddantur formæ.* — / HOR. / [rule] THE THIRD EDITION. / [double rule] LONDON. / Printed for JOHN MURRAY, Successor to Mr. / SANDBY, N<sup>o</sup> 32, Fleet-street. / MDCCCLXIX. /

The Fourth Edition followed in 1782. THE / CASTLE of OTRANTO, / A / GOTHIC STORY. / Translated by / WILLIAM MARSHAL, GENT. / From

the Original ITALIAN of / ONUPHRIO MURALTO, /  
 CANON of the Church of St. NICHOLAS / at OTRANTO. /  
 [rule]—*Vanæ / Fingentur species, tamen ut Pes, &  
 Caput uni / Reddantur formæ.*— / HOR. / [rule] THE  
 FOURTH EDITION. / [double rule] LONDON: / PRINTED  
 FOR J. DODSLEY, IN PALL-MALL. / [rule] M.DCC.LXXXII.

The Fifth Edition, 1786, and the Sixth Edition, 1791, both printed for J. Dodsley, have *mutatis mutandis* their title-pages exactly set as the title-page of the Fourth Edition.

But there is also another edition (1791) which is known as the Sixth Edition, the famous Bodoni edition, or rather, EDWARDS'S EDITION OF / THE / CASTLE OF OTRANTO. / This has as title-page: THE CASTLE / OF OTRANTO, / A / GOTHIC STORY. / TRANSLATED / BY / WILLIAM MARSHAL, GENT. / FROM THE ORIGINAL ITALIAN / OF ONUPHRIO MURALTO, / CANON OF THE CHURCH OF ST. NICHOLAS / AT OTRANTO. / THE SIXTH EDITION. / PARMA. / PRINTED BY BODONI, FOR / J. EDWARDS, BOOKSELLER OF LONDON. / MDCCXCI. / This is a truly superb book. The British Museum copy has a frontispiece in three states, slightly differing in detail, "The Castle of Otranto. From an Original Drawing, as it now exists, in the Kingdom of Naples." *Barlow sculp.* The original drawing, which was made on the spot in 1785, had been presented to Walpole, and by him inserted in his copy of the romance, first edition, 1765.

In 1795 was published a famous Italian translation of *The Castle of Otranto*. IL / CASTELLO DI OTRANTO, / STAMPATO DA T. BENSLEY, / SOTTO LI ISPEZIONE DI / GIOVANNI SIVRAC, A.M. / The title-page is: IL / CASTELLO DI OTRANTO. / [rule] STORIA GOTICA. / [rule] [ornament] IN LONDRA: / PRESSO MOLINI, POLIDORI, MOLINI E Co.

HAY-MARKET; / ED. I. EDWARDS, PALL-MALL, / 1795. / There are seven illustrations *del<sup>to</sup>. da una dama* (Miss Clarke, niece of Sir Charles Ratcliffe), *Birrell incisit.* Each of these is inscribed *Londra I Genn<sup>o</sup>. 1795. Pubbl. da Gio. Sivrac.* Their titles are as follows: Castello di Otranto; Isabella e Manfredi; Teodore [*sic*] ed Isabella; Teodoro e Matilda; Teodoro ed Isabella; Federigo Teodoro ed Isabella; Girolamo ed Ippolita. These plates were used by Jeffery in his edition, and it is they which are reproduced in the present book.

The first issue of Jeffery's edition appeared in 1796. JEFFERY'S EDITION / OF THE / CASTLE OF OTRANTO, / A / GOTHIC STORY. / TRANSLATED BY / WILLIAM MARSHAL, GENT. / FROM / THE ORIGINAL ITALIAN / OF / ONUPHRIO MURALTO, / CANON OF THE CHURCH OF ST. NICHOLAS / AT OTRANTO. / [*double rule*]—*Vanæ / Fingentur species, tamen ut Pes, & Caput uni / Reddantur formæ.*— / HOR. / [*double rule*] A NEW EDITION. / [*double rule*] LONDON. / PRINTED BY COOPER AND GRAHAM, / And sold by the Publisher, No. 11, PALL-MALL. / [*rule*] 1796. / *Price One Pound Seven Shillings in Boards, with / coloured Plates and Borders.* / A small number of this edition was printed upon vellum, and these are charming books. The Directions to the Binder give a list of the Plates with the Italian names, but for the last, *Girolamo ed Ippolita*, there is a misprint, *Geroldino ed Ippolita*. Only a very few copies of Sivrac's Italian edition had tinted illustrations, but in Jeffery's edition the plates were beautifully coloured.

Jeffery's edition was re-issued four years later. / Printed by W. Blackader, 16 Took's Court, Chancery Lane; / And sold by the Publisher, No. 11, PALL-MALL, / 1800. / [*rule*] *Price One Pound Seven Shillings in Boards, with / coloured Plates and Borders.* /

This reprint is very inferior and disappointing. The plates appear feebly coloured and faded; in many copies, even, they have been carelessly inserted in a wrong order; and altogether the volume is a poor production.



## THE MYSTERIOUS MOTHER

### TEXTUAL NOTES

THE first edition, Strawberry Hill, 1768, has two misprints which are duly corrected as Errata. It reads "Bestrew me, but I tremble" (p. 161, l. 7) to be amended to "Beshrew me"; and "Throne of mercy! lo! we bend (p. 181, l. 18) to be amended to "Throne of justice!"

Page 155, line 9. *Chill the suspended soul.* The Dublin edition, 1791; and Scott's edition, 1811; all read "dull the suspended soul." As before noted, Walpole himself explained: "In my original, in the second line of the first scene, was *chill* not *dull*, as *chilling* is more productive of fear than *dulling* is."

P. 155, l. 13. *It knows not wherefore. What a kind of being Is circumstance.*

1791, and 1811 arrange thus:

"It knows not wherefore——  
What a kind of being is circumstance!"

P. 155, l. 22. *and enquir'd.* 1791, and 1811 read: "and inquir'd."

P. 156, l. 18. *obstinately faithfull.* 1791, and 1811 read: "obstinately faithful."

P. 157, l. 17. *the livelong night.* 1791, and 1811 read: "the live-long night."

P. 157, l. 29. *a willing fair one.* 1791, and 1811 read: "a willing fair-one."

P. 158, l. 23. *What, if I bring thee tidings.* 1791, and 1811 omit "thee."

P. 158, l. 29. *Sir gentleman?* So 1811 correctly, but 1791 has "Sir, gentleman?"

P. 160, l. 3. *Oh! he has play'd me.* 1791, and 1811 read: "Oh! how he has play'd me."

P. 160, l. 8. *woefull day!* 1791, and 1811 have: "woeful day!"

P. 160, l. 27. *'Tis ever thus.* 1791, and 1811 interpolate before this speech: "*Por. (Continues.).*"

P. 161, l. 2. *minist'ring.* 1791, and 1811 read: "minist'ring."

P. 161, l. 22. *have I borne this staff.* 1791 reads: "my staff." Walpole, in a letter to Joseph Cooper Walker, says with reference to this passage as given in the edition of 1791, "p. 12. line 2, for *the* staff, read *this*"; but 1791 has "my staff." 1811 reads "my staff."

P. 163, l. 13. *falt'ring lip.* 1791, and 1811 give "fault'ring lip."

P. 163, l. 16. *I fix'd.* 1791, and 1811 read: "I've fix'd."

P. 165, l. 24. *art, but a tool,  
My groveling fortune forces me to use.*

1791, and 1811 read:

"art, but a tool

My groveling fortune forces me to use."

P. 169, l. 19. *I shall be a corpse.* 1791, and 1811 read "corse."

P. 169, l. 21. *Willt give me virtues?* 1791 reads: "Wil't"; 1811: "Will't."

P. 173, l. 23. *juglers.* 1791, and 1811 read: "jugglers."

P. 173, l. 28. *mournfull occupation.* 1791, and 1811 give: "mournful occupation."

P. 175, l. 24. *A prophanation.* 1791, and 1811:  
“A profanation.”

P. 180, l. 3. *fruitfull.* 1791, and 1811: “fruitful.”

P. 181, l. 14. *the stage-door.* 1791, and 1811 have:  
“the stage door.”

P. 182, l. 28. *to chant our holy dirge.* 1791, and  
1811 read: “to chaunt our holy dirge.”

P. 191, l. 23. *some unpractic'd fair one.* 1791, and  
1811 read: “some unpractis'd fair one.”

P. 193, l. 15. *sawcy superiority.* 1791, and 1811:  
“saucy superiority.”

P. 195, l. 27. *dreadfull apparatus.* 1791, and 1811  
give: “dreadful apparatus.”

P. 210, l. 3. *thy sovereign too.* 1791, and 1811  
read: “thy sov'reign too.”

P. 213, l. 14. *Our great Ignatius.* 1781, London,  
Printed for J. Dodsley, Pall-Mall, 1791, 1798, and  
1811 read “our great Augustine.” This seems a  
preferable emendation as S. Ignatius Loyola, to  
whom the reference is, was born in 1491, died at  
Rome 31st July 1556, and was canonized 22nd May  
1622, dates which are too late for the period of the  
play.

P. 222, l. 13. *balefull wing.* 1791, and 1811 read:  
“baleful wing.”

P. 226, l. 18. *e'er the measure.* 1791, and 1811  
give: “ere the measure.”

P. 229, l. 8. *Pray be advis'd.* [*in a low voice.* 1781,  
1791, 1798, and 1811 all omit the stage direction.

P. 239, l. 5. *its efficacy's lost—* 1791, and 1811  
read: “its efficacy lost—”

P. 240, l. 7. *her pulse replies not.* 1791 misprints:  
“her pulse reply not.”

P. 242, l. 3. [*To FLORIAN.*]*—Stranger, thy years  
are green.* 1781, 1791, 1798, and 1811 omit  
“[*To FLORIAN.*]”

P. 249, l. 11. [*seizing the dagger.*] 1791, and 1811 both misprint: [*Seeing the dagger.*]

P. 254, l. 5. *his fellow-beings.* 1791 has "his fellow-being."

P. 256, l. 26. *I was willing to insinuate.* 1791 reads: "I am willing to insinuate."

Writing from Strawberry Hill, on 4th April 1791, Walpole addressed the following letter to Joseph Cooper Walker with reference to the 1791 edition of *The Mysterious Mother*. He says: "I have received the copy of my tragedy, and am exceedingly obliged to you, Sir, for the care with which you have been so good as to see it printed. . . . The text is surprisingly correct. I have found some very immaterial errors, or rather only literal alterations (probably from some MS. copy), and one alone that affects the sense, and that not in the piece, but in the postscript, where in p. 98, line 11, *terror* is printed for *horror*. I will just specify the rest though of no consequence. In p. 5, line the 6th should have been printed thus,

"It knows not wherefore. What a kind of being  
Is circumstance!"

there the pause should be; and then

I am a soldier, &c.

"In p. 10, line 11, Oh! he has play'd me, &c., dele *how*; p. 12, line 2, for *the* staff, read *this*; p. 15 last line but two, after *tool* dele the comma; p. 81, for *efficacy* lost, read *efficacy's* lost; p. 82, for pulse reply not, read *replies* not; p. 94, for fellow being, read fellow beings; p. 97, for but I *am* willing to insinuate, read I *was* willing, etc.

"Now, Sir, I should blush to mention such very

trifling inaccuracies, if I did not think it a just return for your trouble of overlooking the press, to prove to you that even the jealous eye of an author could discover no more, and no more material slips. Consequently I must again thank you, though again lament the advertisement from the publishers, of which I hope you will always bear me witness I was perfectly ignorant and innocent. For every other attention I shall always be, Sir,

“Your much obliged and obedient humble servant,

“HOR. WALPOLE.

“N. In my original, in the second line of the first scene, was *chill*, not *dull*, as *chilling* is more productive of fear than *dulling* is.”





# THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO

## NOTES EXPLANATORY

Page 3, line 1.

**T**HE CASTLE OF OTRANTO. The title-page of the second edition, when Walpole first calls his romance "A Gothic Story" is as follows: THE / CASTLE of OTRANTO, / A / GOTHIC STORY. /—*Vanae* / *Fingentur species, tamen ut Pes, & Caput uni* / *Reddantur formae*— / HOR. / THE SECOND EDITION. / LONDON: / Printed for WILLIAM BATHOE in the *Strand*, / and THOMAS LOWNDS in *Fleet-Street*. / MDCC.LXV. / The Horatian quotation is from the *Ars Poetica*, 7-9, and should more correctly run:

" uanae

fingentur species, ut nec pes nec caput uni  
reddatur formae."

P. 3, l. 9. *Church of St. Nicholas*. S. Nicolas, whose Body is venerated at Bari, is one of the most popular Saints and favourite Patrons of the whole district. There is a Franciscan monastery of S. Nicolas at Otranto. Although the town is still the residence of an Archbishop, it has dwindled from its mediaeval prosperity to a mere fishing village. The Castle was actually built by Alfonso of Aragon, and its massive walls, with the two large circular towers, added by Charles V, still constitute one of the most picturesque objects in the neighbourhood. In 1480, at the time of the Turkish invasion, Otranto numbered more than twenty thousand citizens. The Cathedral, dedicated to the Nativity of Our Lady, which contains several columns taken from the ruins of a Temple of Minerva, is in S. Nicola, a southern

suburb of the town. The Chapter formerly consisted of eighteen Canons and an Archdeacon.

P. 5, l. 19. *Arragonian kings in Naples.* When King Manfred perished in the battle of Benevento, 1266, and Conradin, after his defeat at Tagliacozzo, was executed, 1268, Peter III of Aragon laid claim to the city on account of his marriage to a daughter of Manfred. The people, who hated French rule, made way for him by the Sicilian Vespers, 1282. Mary, daughter and heiress of Frederick III, 1355-77, was married to Martin, son of the King of Aragon, who reunited Sicily to that realm in 1410, and was succeeded by Alfonso V, 1416-58. In 1420 Louis III of Anjou declared war against Joanna II of Naples, whereupon she adopted as her heir Alfonso, son of Ferdinand of Aragon and Sicily. She died in 1434, and after a struggle, in 1442 Alfonso established Spanish rule in the kingdom of Naples. By the Treaty of Granada Ferdinand the Catholic and Louis XII divided the kingdom between them, and although there were contentions between the two powers Gonsalvo de Cordova drove the French from Italy by the battle of Cerignola, 1503, and Naples thereafter was governed by Spanish viceroys. In the war of the Spanish succession Naples was captured by the Austrians for Charles III, son of the Emperor Leopold, but in 1734 Charles of Bourbon, assisted by the Spanish general Montemar, conquered Naples, and reigned as Charles III. When he ascended the throne of Spain, he left Naples to his third son, Ferdinand IV, 1759-1825.

P. 11, l. 2. *The Right Honourable Lady Mary Coke.* Lady Mary Campbell, fifth daughter and co-heir of the second Duke of Argyll. She married (1747) Edward Coke, Viscount Coke (died 1753), from whom she was separated. She subsequently

became attached to Edward, Duke of York (brother of George III), and wished to have it believed that she was married to him. For many years she remained on very intimate terms with Walpole, but their friendship cooled after the marriage of Walpole's niece, Lady Waldegrave, to the Duke of Gloucester, a union which Lady Mary resented. In later life she became extremely eccentric. She died in 1811. Part of her *Journal* has been privately printed.

P. 16, l. 22. *Thomas Corneille's Earl of Essex*. This tragedy was produced at the theatre of the Hôtel de Bourgogne early in January 1678. On 25th February following Abbé Boyer's drama upon the same subject was performed at the Théâtre Guénégaud. A *Comte d'Essex*, by la Calprenède, had been acted in 1638. Voltaire writes: "Aucun de ces trois auteurs ne s'est attaché scrupuleusement à l'histoire;

piëtoribus atque poetis  
quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas.

Mais cette liberté a ses bonnes comme toute autre espèce de liberté."

In his *Remarques sur le Comte d'Essex* Voltaire certainly has: "Le comte de Leicester succéda dans la faveur à Dudley."

P. 17, l. 1. *Enfant Prodigue*. *L'Enfant Prodigue*, comédie en vers dissyllabes. Représentée sur le Théâtre de la Comédie Française le 10 Octobre, 1736. The book was published at Paris in 1738, "Chez Prault fils, Quay de Conty, vis-à-vis la descente du Pont-neuf, à la Charité," and cost thirty sols. The passage which Walpole quotes from the Preface commences: "Si la Comédie doit être la représentation des mœurs, cette Pièce semble être assez de ce caractère. On y voit un mélange de sérieux et de plaisanterie. . . ."

P. 17, l. 28. *I am aware . . .* The introduction to *L'Enfant Prodigue* is called "Preface de l'Editeur," but it is actually from the pen of Voltaire himself, and at the end of the printed play, 8vo, 1738, we have: "Avertissement. Nonobstant ce qui se trouve dans la Preface, nous assurons le Public, que cette Pièce est de M. de Voltaire."

P. 18, l. 5. *Maffei*. Francisco Scipione, Marquis Maffei, was born at Verona, 1676, and died in 1755. His most celebrated work is the tragedy *Merope*, 1713. This was at once regarded by his contemporaries as a classic. In a letter dated 23rd December 1737, Voltaire says that he has just finished the scenario of his *Méropé*. It was produced at Paris 20th February 1743, with Mlle. Dumesnil in the title-rôle, and published in the following year. To the printed play Voltaire has prefixed an epistle addressed to Maffei. Herein occurs the passage to which Walpole refers: "On ne comptait dans Athènes que dix mille citoyens, et notre ville est peuplée de près de huit cent mille habitants, parmi lesquels je crois qu'on peut compter trente mille juges des ouvrages dramatiques, et qui jugent presque tous les jours." The passage from Maffei's *Merope* which Voltaire translates occurs in Act V, Scene 3, and commences:

" O curioso

Punto i' non son: passò stagione: assai  
Vedutti ho sacrifici."

In 1745 Maffei published at Verona an elaborate edition of his fine drama. This beautiful book, which has superb illustrations, gives the French version of *Merope* by Freret, the English translation by William Ayre, and a complete answer to Voltaire.

P. 19, l. 18. *De son appartement cette porte. Bérénice*, I, 1, ll. 8, 9. This couplet has met with some adverse



comments from French writers, notably Villars, *Critique de Bérénice*.

P. 33, l. 10. *He saw it quit its panel.* This striking incident of a mysterious picture was often copied in the Gothic romances. Thus in *The Spirit of Turretville* an old servant, who has entered a deserted chamber, is appalled to see an ancient portrait bow its head. In *The Spirit of the Castle* the portrait of a murdered man, which is thrown away on a lumber heap for destruction, is the next day found to be hanging in its wonted place on the wall, the colours brighter and fresher than before. In *Melmoth* the eyes of the ancestor's portrait shine with a demon light, and as the wrinkled and torn canvas is wrenched from its frame the lips writhe in a hideous grin. One may compare Oscar Wilde's theme in *The Portrait of Dorian Grey*. Dr. M. R. James in *The Mezzotint*, Mrs. Nesbit in *Grim Tales*, and Mr. E. F. Benson's *The Judge's House* (which is reminiscent of Le Fanu's *An Account of Some Strange Disturbances in Aungier Street*) all tell of haunted pictures.

P. 125, l. 23. *Three drops of blood.* A recognized omen of ill. In Webster's *The Dutchesse of Malfy*, 4to, 1623, II, 2, Delio says:

“How superstitiously we mind our evils!  
The throwing downe salt, or crossing of a hare,  
Bleeding at nose, the stumbling of a horse,  
Or singing of a criket, are of powre  
To daunt whole man in us.”

In the following scene Antonio cries:

“My nose bleedes:  
One that were superstitious would count  
This ominous, when it meerey comes by chance.  
Two letters, that are wrought here, for my name,  
Are drown'd in blood: meere accedent.”

The "letters" are his initials, worked ("wrought") upon his handkerchief. Nash, *The Terrors of the Night*, 1594, has: "if his nose bleede, some of his kinsfolkes is dead."

Three drops of blood only were particularly ominous. In Dryden's *Amboyna*, produced by the King's Company at Lincoln's Inn Fields in the summer of 1673, Captain Towerson, just before he discovers his ravished bride, says:

"Something within me does forbode me ill;  
I stumbled when I enter'd first this Wood;  
My Nostrils bled three Drops; then stop'd the Blood,  
And not one more wou'd follow."

John Banks, the tragic dramatist, refers to this belief more than once in his dramas, as in *Vertue Betray'd*; or, *Anna Bullen*, produced at Dorset Garden in the early autumn of 1682, Act IV, where Anna Bullen (Mrs. Barry) is alarmed at the portent:

"Ha! The time's come, my Fatal Doom's at hand.

[Three Drops of Blood fall from her Nose, and stain  
her Handkerchief.

Behold, the Heav'ns in Characters of Blood,  
In three inevitable Drops,  
Have seal'd it, and decreed that it is now!"

Again in *The Island Queens*; or, *The Death of Mary, Queen of Scotland*, printed quarto, 1684, but forbidden to be acted, and not put on the stage until 6th March 1704, when it was revised as *The Albion Queens*; or, *The Death of Mary, Queen of Scots*, and given at Drury Lane, young Dowglass the page thus expresses his fears on his mistress's behalf (Act III):

"Last Night no sooner was I laid to rest,  
Than just three drops of Blood fell from my Nose,  
And stain'd my Pillow, which I found this morning  
And wonder'd at."

Queen Mary replies:

“ That rather does betoken  
Some mischief to thy self.”

In Mrs. Eliza Haywood's *Lasselia ; or, the Self-Abandon'd*, 1723, when De L'Amye first meets the heroine three drops of blood fall from his nose and stain the white handkerchief which she is holding. This accident fills her with extreme disquiet. “ She wou'd start like one in a Frenzy, and cry out Oh! it was not for nothing that those ominous Drops of Blood fell from him on my Handkerchief!—It was not for nothing I was seiz'd with such an unusual Horror! ”

A variation of this omen occurs in *Kilverstone Castle, or, The Heir Restored*, “ a Gothic Story,” anon. 1799, when the young Baron discovers a mysterious onyx cross, around which “ was diffused a livid light,” suspended by a golden chain “ from the collar ” of a haunted suit of mail. He places the chain upon his neck: “ Soon as the amulet had touched his bosom, from every point of the cross there fell warm drops of blood; and, with a horrid clangour, the armour shook in every joint! ” This warns him of danger; and, in fact, his life is about to be attempted. But as the enemy approached “ the crucifix upon the bosom of Mervil again let fall fresh tears of blood,” and “ unusual terrors ” seize the soul of the assassin, whose “ dark resolves ” were effectually shaken.

P. 145, l. 8. *The form of Alfonso, dilated to an immense magnitude.* So in William Child Green's *Abbot of Montserrat; or, The Pool of Blood*, a Romance, London, Newman and Co., 1826, whilst the evil, but repentant, Obando is expiring as the walls blaze

about him, "a form resembling the deceased father Augustine, but much superior in magnitude" is seen "slowly ascending among the smouldering ruins of the edifice."

## THE MYSTERIOUS MOTHER

### NOTES EXPLANATORY

Page 151, line 6.

*SIT mihi fas audita loqui.* Vergil, *Æneid*, VI, 266.

P. 165, l. 28. *Make them bow to creeds myself would laugh at.* The edition of 1781 has the following note upon this line: "Alluding to Sixtus Quintus." The reference seems very obscure, and must at any rate only be general, not particular. Sixtus V (Felice Peretti) was born at Grottamare, near Montalto, 13th December 1521; elected Pope 24th April 1585; crowned 1st May 1585; died in the Quirinal 27th August 1590. This great pontiff was imbued with loftiest ideals, and he sustained his high office with the utmost dignity. A manuscript Life of Sixtus V in the Altieri Library has: "Uix aut rerum moles maior aut maioris animi Pontifex ullo unquam tempore concurrerunt."

P. 171, l. 30. *'Twas my son's birth.* The edition of 1781 here has the following note: "On the death of the Comte de Vermandois, his mother, the Duchess de la Valière, said, Must I weep for his death before I have done weeping for his birth?" The Duchess de la Vallière had four children by Louis XIV, but of these only two lived, Marie-Anne de Bourbon (Mlle. de Blois), born in 1666, and Louis de Bourbon, Comte de Vermandois, born at Paris 2nd October 1667. He fell ill at the Siege of Courtrai, and died at the early age of sixteen. In November 1683 Bossuet came to the Carmelite convent to



break the news to his mother, and Madame de Caylus says: "Je me souviens d'avoir ouï raconter que M. l'évêque de Meaux lui ayant annoncé la mort de son fils, elle avait par un mouvement naturel, répandu beaucoup de larmes. Mais que revenant tout à coup à elle, elle dit à ce prélat: 'C'est trop pleurer la mort d'un fils dont je n'ai pas encore pleuré la naissance.'"

P. 173, l. 3. *What should I inquire?* Lucan, *Pharsalia*, ix, 565-584. Labienus urges Cato to consult the oracle of Ammon, but he replies:

"Quid quaeri Labiene iubes? an liber in armis  
occubuisse uelim potius, quam regna uidere?  
an sit uita nihil, sed longam differat aetas?  
an noceat uis ulla bono? fortunaque perdat  
opposita uirtute minas? laudandaque uelle  
sit satis, et numquam successu crescat honestum?  
scimus, et hoc nobis non altius inseret Hammon.  
haeremus cuncti Superis, temploque tacente  
nil facimus non sponte Dei: nec uocibus ullis  
numen eget: dixitque semel nascentibus auctor  
quidquid scire licet: sterileis nec legit harenas,  
ut caneret paucis, mersitque hoc puluere uerum:  
estne Dei sedes nisi terra, et pontus, et aer,  
et coelum, et uirtus? Superos quid quaerimus ultra?  
Juppiter est quodcumque uides, quocumque moueris.  
sortilegis egeant dubii, semperque futuris  
casibus ancipites: me non oracula certum  
sed mors certa facit: pauido, fortique cadendum est.  
hoc satis est dixisse Jouem."

P. 177, l. 8. *At Buda 'gainst the Turk.* The Ottoman power occupied Buda in 1541.

P. 179, l. 18. *Be canoniz'd a new Teresa.* Teresa Cepeda y Ahumada, the Seraphic Mother of Carmel,

Santa Teresa de Jesus, was born at Avila on Wednesday, 28th March 1515, and died at Alba de Tormes 4th October 1582. She was beatified in 1614 by Paul V, and canonized 12th May 1622 by Gregory XV, her feast being fixed for 15th October.

P. 181, l. 14. *The stage-door.* One of the two permanent proscenium doors. At this period there was a wide apron stage, and on either side a solid and practicable door in the proscenium with a conventional balcony above.

P. 197, l. 20. *How happy the death-bed of innocence!* The edition of 1781 here has the following note: "Dr. Young relates that Mr. Addison on his death-bed spoke in this manner to his pupil Lord Warwick." Addison died 17th June 1719 at Holland House.

P. 203, l. 30. *We will do more, we will deserve it.* Addison's *Cato*, I, 2, where Portius says:

" 'Tis not in Mortals to command Success,  
But we'll do more, *Sempronius*, we'll deserve it."

A note in the edition of 1781 refers to this passage. *Cato*, a severely classical tragedy, was produced at Drury Lane 14th April 1713, with Barton Booth in the title-rôle; Powell, Portius; Mills, Sempronius.

P. 213, l. 14. *Zeno.* A native of Citium in Cyprus, the founder of the Stoic philosophy. He is said to have died at the advanced age of ninety-eight, whence he was still alive in the 130th Olympiad, 260 B.C.

P. 213, l. 19. *The singing saints.* The Waldenses, a sect founded by Waldes (Waldo) of Lyons towards the end of the twelfth century. They were divided into two classes, *Perfecti* (the Perfect Saints) and *Credentes* (Friends or Believers). Their peculiar tenets, which in the course of time have become modified to a species of Calvinism, were at first

entirely lawless and revolutionary. They were consistently opposed by the Dukes of Savoy.

P. 216, l. 24. *Tobit's guardian spirit.* The edition of 1781 here has the following note: "Alluding to a picture of Salvator Rosa, in which the story is thus told." Salvator Rosa was born at Renella, in the neighbourhood of Naples, 21st July 1615, and died at Rome 15th March 1673. The picture to which Walpole refers is in the National Gallery. It represents a forest scene, a wild rocky landscape, with the figures of Tobit and the Angel S. Raphael. Fuseli has well described the character of Salvator's pictures: "He delights in ideas of desolation, solitude, and danger; impenetrable forests, rocky or storm-lashed shores; in lonely dells leading to dens and caverns of banditti; alpine ridges, trees blasted by lightning or sapped by time, or stretching their extravagant arms athwart a murky sky, lowering or thundering clouds, and suns shorn of their beams. His figures are wandering shepherds, forlorn travellers, wrecked mariners, banditti lurking for their prey, or dividing their spoils." Much of Salvator's best work is in this country.

P. 230, l. 5. *Moppet.* This is one of Dryden's words. Cf. his Prologue to Southerne's *The Loyal Brother; or, The Persian Prince*, 4to, 1682:

"The Miter'd Moppet from his Chair they draw."

It occurs in Rowe's *Jane Shore* (1714):

"A Moppet made of Prettiness and Pride."

It is a favourite word with Walpole, who uses it in his Letters, e.g., 13th November 1766 and 25th March 1781.

P. 230, l. 23. *A poor friar's knife.* On this line the edition of 1781 notes: "Alluding to the assassina-

tions of Henry III and IV." Henri III of France was mortally stabbed at St. Cloud by the Dominican Jacques Clément on 2nd August 1589. Henri IV was killed, as he rode in his carriage through the Paris streets, with two blows of a dagger by François Ravallac, on 14th May 1610. But Ravallac was not a religious. He once, it is true, tried his vocation at a monastery of the Feuillants, who are an offshoot of the Cistercian Order, instituted by Dom Jean de la Barriere, and approved at Rome in 1586. But the good fathers were soon obliged to dismiss him since he persistently professed to have visions of such a character as manifestly showed that he was completely disordered in his wits.

P. 231, l. 18. *Bind him to the red waves of the ocean.* An allusion to the belief that demons or unquiet ghosts could be laid to rest beneath the waves of the Red Sea. The idea is closely connected with the destruction of Pharaoh and his host (Exodus, xiv), and is, no doubt, also largely due to certain striking phrases in the solemn rite "De exorcizandis Obsessis a Daemonis." In the second prayer following the Paternoster we have: "Da, Domine, terrorem tuum super bestiam, quae exterminat vineam tuam. Da fiduciam servis tuis contra nequissimum draconem pugnare fortissime, ne contemnat sperantes in te, et ne dicat, sicut in Pharaone, qui iam dixit: Deum non novi, nec Israel dimitto." In the third Exorcism, which commences "Adiuro ergo te, omnis immun-dissime spiritus, omne phantasma, omnis incursio Satanæ, . . ." we also have: "Cede ergo Deo ☩ qui te, et malitiam tuam in Pharaone, et in exercitu eius per Moysen serum suum in abyssum demersit. Cede Deo ☩ qui te per fidelissimum serum in abyssum demersit."

P. 236, l. 29 *The Vaudois.* The fanaticism of the

Vaudois was so anarchical and anti-social that in 1545 it became necessary for d'Oppède, President of the Parliament of Aix, to adopt stern repressive measures.

P. 253, l. 7. *Terror and pity.* "οὐ γὰρ πᾶσαν δεῖ ζητεῖν ἡδονὴν ἀπὸ τραγωδίας ἀλλὰ τὴν οἰκείαν. ἐπεὶ δὲ τὴν ἀπὸ ἐλέου καὶ φόβου διὰ μιμήσεως δεῖ ἡδονὴν παρασκευάζειν τὸν ποιητὴν, φανερὸν ὡς τοῦτο ἐν τοῖς πράγμασιν ἐμποιεῖται." Aristotle, *Poetics*, xiv.

P. 254, l. 15. *Archbishop Tillotson.* John Tillotson, 1630-1694, the famous semi-Socinian divine, was nominated 22nd April 1691 to the see of Canterbury, which, to his credit, he was very reluctant to accept, justly regarding himself as "a wedge to drive out" Archbishop Sancroft. Tillotson was elected, however, 16th May following, and consecrated in Bow Church 31st May, Whitsunday. William Sancroft, 1617-1693, had been consecrated Primate 27th January 1678, and refusing, for conscience' sake, the vows to William III, he was ejected from his see to make way for the more supple intruder. His departure was hastened by an insolent and peremptory letter from Mary II 20th May 1691. Tillotson's method of dealing with the case here related shows a complete ignorance of moral theology.

P. 255, l. 17. *The reign of Louis XII... in Langue-doc. The Heptameron, Troisième journée, nouvelle xxx.* "Comment un Gentil homme se trouve, sans le savoir, épouser sa fille et sa sœur." The rubric is as follows: "Un jeune Gentil homme, âgé de quatorze à quinze ans, pensant coucher avec l'une des Demoiselles de sa mère, coucha avec elle même, qui au bout de neuf mois accoucha, du fait de son filz, d'une fille, que douze ou treize ans après il épousa, ne sachant qu'elle fût sa fille et sa sœur, ny elle qu'il fût son père et son frère." The novel commences thus:



“ Au temps du Roy Loys douzieme, estant lors Légat d’Avignon ung de la Maison d’Amboise, nepveu du Légat de France nommé Georges, y avoyt au païs de Languedoc une Dame, de laquelle je tairay le nom pour l’amour de sa race qui avoyt mieulx de quatre mil ducatz de renté.” The Legate was Louis d’Amboise, Bishop of Alby, 1474-1502. Georges d’Amboise, Cardinal d’Amboise, was the favourite of Louis XII, who reigned 1498-1515.

P. 257, l. 21. *Lutes, laurels.* This line from the mad ravings of the unhappy Belvidera, Act V of *Venice Preserv’d*, is perfectly appropriate in its context. The scenes where she appears distraught are exquisitely written and infinitely pathetic. Otway’s great tragedy was produced at the Duke’s theatre, Dorset Garden, early in 1681-2, with Mrs. Barry as Belvidera, one of her finest creations. These lines have been parodied by Gay in his rather stupid burlesque *What d’ye Call It?* given at Drury Lane 23rd February 1715. Here Kitty Carrot, the heroine, declaims with wild gestures:

“ Bagpipes in butter, flocks in fleecy fountains,  
Churns, Sheep-hooks, seas of milk and honey  
mountains.”

P. 260, l. 4. *Jane Shore.* Rowe’s *The Tragedy of Jane Shore. Written in Imitation of Shakespear’s Style* was produced at Drury Lane 2nd February 1714 with Mrs. Oldfield in the title-rôle. This drama proved immensely popular, and was still acted late in the nineteenth century. Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Siddons, and Miss O’Neill were particularly famous in this part. *Jane Shore* is an equable tragedy not without dignity and pathos, delivered in verse that is melodious and sweet.

P. 260, l. 5. *Cato.* Addison’s scenes are too

chaste and too correct to be wholly pleasing. There is something of frigidity which allows our approbation but forbids our interest.

P. 260, l. 6. *Southern*. Southerne wrote five tragedies: *The Loyal Brother* ; or, *The Persian Prince*, produced at Drury Lane in the spring of 1681-2; *The Fatal Marriage* ; or, *The Innocent Adultery*, Drury Lane, February 1693-4; *Oroonoko*, Drury Lane, early in 1695-6; *The Fate of Capua*, Lincoln's Inn Fields, 1700; and *The Spartan Dame*, Drury Lane, 11th December 1719. Here reference is directly made to *The Fatal Marriage* and *Oroonoko*. Both these plays are founded upon novels by Mrs. Behn; *The History of the Nun* ; or, *The Fair Vow-Breaker* (12mo, 1689), and *Oroonoko* (12mo, 1688). In the theatre they were long applauded, and continued on the acting list until the middle of the nineteenth century. In Southerne's originals a comic underplot is connected and alternates with the more serious incidents. A mistaken judgement excised no small portion of these lighter scenes from *Oroonoko*, whilst *The Fatal Marriage* fared even worse, for it fell into the hands of Garrick, the Procrustes of the drama, and was unmercifully lopped and distorted. When produced at Covent Garden in March 1770, the title was altered to *Isabella*, by which name it was thenceforth known and performed.

P. 260, l. 10. *The Mourning Bride*. Walpole's opinion is patently absurd. *The Mourning Bride*, which was produced at Lincoln's Inn Fields early in 1697, long enjoyed a period of well-deserved eulogy, but towards the end of the eighteenth century was as generally decried. Congreve's tragedy "may be said to hold a very notable and distinguished place among the many famous dramas which take their rank a little below the masterpieces, and this is no

mean praise. The fable is interesting and romantic, the situations engage our sympathy, the language has much dignity, and the sentiment is often very beautifully expressed. As is well known, Dr. Johnson pronounced the famous passage at the commencement of the second act, when Almeria and her attendant are entering the temple aisles to be 'the most poetical paragraph in the whole mass of English poetry.' "

P. 260, l. 11. *Lee*. The poetical merit of Lee's tragedies is very great, and often his scenes have passages of rare beauty. Occasionally, however, his diction swells to extravagance, not unpleasing in itself, but vulnerable in a chaste opinion. His mind gave way, and on 11th November 1684 he was confined in Bethlem, where he remained for a space of five years. He died no great while after his release, and was buried at S. Clement Danes 6th May 1692.

P. 260, l. 12. *Young*. Edward Young, 1681-1765, is the author of three tragedies, *Busiris*, produced at Drury Lane 7th March 1718; *The Revenge*, Drury Lane, 18th April 1721; and *The Brothers*, produced at Drury Lane 3rd March 1753, with Garrick and Mossop in the title-rôles, Demetrius and Perseus. There is much excellence in these dramas, and *The Revenge*, in particular, is vigorous and interesting. Zanga, the Moor, was long a favourite part with our greatest actors even down to the days of Edmund Kean, who excelled in it, and Macready. It was played as late as 1865 by Ira Aldridge, the negro star.

P. 260, l. 13. *Hughes and Fenton*. John Hughes, 1677-1720, is chiefly remembered as the author of *The Siege of Damascus*, which was produced at Drury Lane 17th February 1720. The plot is derived from Sir William Davenant's *The Siege*. As a playwright

Hughes moves somewhat slowly, and his characters are apt to be rhetorical and argumentative when they should be passionate and pleading. Elijah Fenton, 1683-1730, has one tragedy, *Mariamne*, in which Mrs. Seymour made a great success as the heroine when it was produced 22nd February 1723, at Lincoln's Inn Fields. It is not without a quota of pretty descriptive lines, but Herod, Sohemus, Salome, and the rest are unconvincing and unreal.

Walpole's remark that tragedy "recovered its senses in *Hughes* and *Fenton*" is singularly misjudged, for neither *The Siege of Damascus* nor *Mariamne* will bear comparison with *The Rival Queens*, *Theodosius*, *Lucius Junius Brutus*, *The Massacre of Paris*, and *The Mourning Bride*. It is true, however, that in the mid-eighteenth century tragedy "languished." Such typical dramas as Henry Brooke's *Gustavus Vasa*; Thomson's *Agamemnon*, and *Tancred and Sigismunda*; Aaron Hill's *Alzira* and *Saul*; Whitehead's *The Roman Father*; Glover's *Boadicea*; Henry Jones, the talented bricklayer's *The Earl of Essex*; Crisp's *Virginia*; John Delap's *Hecuba*; Philip Francis's *Constantine*; Tracy's *Periander*; Havard's *Regulus*; Moncrieff's *Appius*; Shirley's *Edward, The Black Prince*; Macnamara Morgan's *Philoclea*; Paterson's *Arminius*; Hall Hartson's *The Countess of Salisbury* are at best academic exercises of cold merit, at worst drab fustian and prosy to boredom and yawns.



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